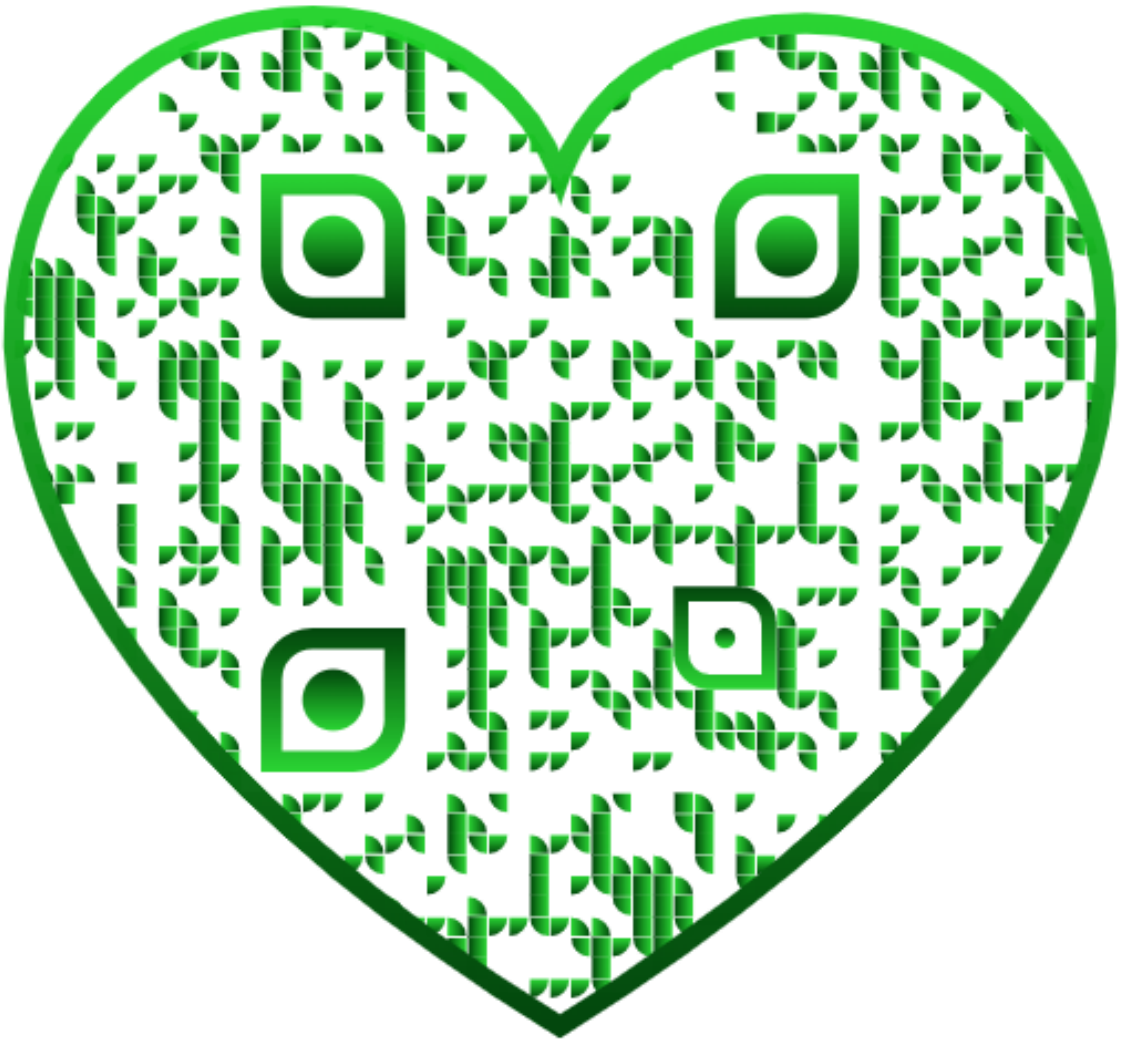
ON THE NATURE OF DEMONS



ON THE NATURE OF DEMONS

DE NATURA DAEMONUM

Giovanni Lorenzo d'Anania

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PREFACE

On the nature of demons (*De Natura Daemonum*) stands as one of the most interesting treatises on demonology ever written. Curiously, it remains an obscure gem within the realm of this esoteric field, much like its enigmatic author, the Italian scholar Giovanni Lorenzo d'Anania.

Delving into the life of d'Anania, we find ourselves navigating a labyrinth of obscurity, as scant details about his origins and lifespan linger in the shadows. Born in Taverna, Calabria, he emerges from the annals of history as a mysterious figure. What we do know is that d'Anania's scholarly pursuits spanned the realms of natural sciences, languages, and theology, yet his profound inclination towards the macabre is unmistakable. His inaugural work, unveiled in Venice in 1570, serves as a testament to this fascination, being a dedicated discourse on malevolent spirits, which incidentally is the subject of our discussion.

True to its title, this opus embarks on a meticulous journey into the heart of demonology. D'Anania's ambitious endeavor was to amalgamate the contemporary knowledge on this subject, drawing from diverse sources, both scholarly and experiential.

Within these pages, d'Anania's systematic odyssey unfolds. He commences by crafting a comprehensive definition of demons, portraying them as ethereal, immortal entities characterized by superior intellect and, essentially, malevolence.

Furthermore, d'Anania adroitly navigates the treacherous waters of skepticism, articulating and defending the belief in the existence of demons. He embarks on a vivid narrative recounting their angelic origins, tracing the rebellion led by Lucifer and his subsequent descent, illustrating how demonic forces were entangled with the genesis of original sin.

Delving deeper into his treatise, d'Anania offers a well-structured taxonomy of demons, segregating them into two principal categories: those ensconced in the depths of hell and those actively intervening on Earth. He then further categorizes these malevolent entities based on their inherent natures and proficiencies.

The pages of this work unfurl myriad activities attributed to demons, from the promotion of diverse divination practices to the employment of arcane arts and necromancy. D'Anania also delves into the realm of summoning demons for personal gain and unveils the cryptic symbols employed in these arcane rituals.

Moreover, he alludes to the manifold ways in which demons manifest themselves in diverse guises, their ability to possess individuals and conjure illusions, their array of powers, and much more.

No facet of this complex subject eludes the author's scrutiny. Scholars, aficionados of demonology, and those captivated by medieval theological beliefs will find in *On the nature of demons* an exhaustive compendium, unraveling the intricacies of these malevolent spirits and offering profound insights into a bygone era's beliefs and perspectives.

John Quail
October 2023

BOOK I

Understanding the nature and power of demons has always been an exceedingly challenging endeavor. This holds true for both philosophers, who have explored this subject profoundly, and theologians, who, through divine inspiration, have delved into it more deeply. It's safe to say that hardly anyone moderately acquainted with literature remains ignorant of this topic. Therefore, it should not come as a surprise that even today, no field of knowledge can claim comprehensive insight into their power, their operational mechanisms, not to mention their fundamental nature. Even in the case of astrology, which humans began to study and practice before all other liberal arts and sciences, we still find ourselves far from achieving complete understanding. Although people have studied it since ancient times, from the days before the Great Flood to the Chaldeans, Hebrews, and Egyptians, and later the Greeks, Latins, Arabs, Persians, Indians, and Chinese, with each culture contributing their unique perspectives, we cannot assert with confidence that we have mastered it.

This difficulty arises from the abstract and elusive nature of these entities, which exist beyond our comprehension and elude our senses. Nevertheless, priests from various cultures have offered some insights into the essence and abilities of these spirits. Theologians, whether Syrian, Greek, or Latin, have also devoted writings to the subject. Discussing these spirits has proven challenging, and we lack the same clarity and organization found in other sciences. It is evident that experts from diverse backgrounds, while presenting differing viewpoints, might have been misled due to the complexity of these entities or their own cunning, resulting in significant deviations from the truth. Catholic scholars, although striving for greater accuracy, often faced limitations in expressing themselves with polished Latin style and elegance, owing to the historical context in which they wrote.

Hence, I believed it would not be a fruitless endeavor to collect and organize the insights I have come across in various writings concerning the nature and

capabilities of these entities. These insights have been drawn from Platonists, among other authors, as well as our theologians. My goal is to present them coherently for the benefit of devout readers. I dedicated considerable time and effort to gather and compile the diverse opinions of numerous authors that I could find. Just as bees diligently collect natural nectar and expertly extract only the valuable components for their hives, driven by instinct, I too have strived to gather and arrange, to the best of my ability, all the information I encountered in an unadulterated manner. Thus, I kindly request that you, dear reader, accept this endeavor of ours with an open and receptive mind, and read it with enthusiasm and curiosity. I trust that the time and attention you invest in perusing these pages will yield a rich harvest, akin to a fertile field.

For a considerable period, a profound debate has raged among philosophers and erudite minds regarding the origins of demons. Specifically, the debate centers on whether demons are divine creations within the natural order or mere products of human intellect and imagination. This enduring discourse has failed to yield a consensus due to its division into two predominant viewpoints. The majority, aligning with the doctrines of Epicureans and Peripatetics, steadfastly asserted that demons had no place in the natural world. They considered these entities superfluous and redundant, advancing persuasive arguments and evidence to discredit the existence of spirits in the universe. According to their perspective, demons resided exclusively within the realm of poetic fiction, folklore, and the wise laws created to discourage immoral behavior and promote righteousness and humanity. Consequently, they deemed these spirits as mere abstract concepts within human beliefs, devoid of genuine existence.

In direct opposition to this standpoint were the Stoics, who drew their belief in demons from the teachings of Socrates and found allies in the Platonists. The Platonists, drawing from a variety of sources, including accounts from wise and virtuous individuals, ancient oracles, and numerous historical records, wholeheartedly affirmed the existence of demons within the natural world. They adamantly argued that demons not only existed but also played pivotal roles in shaping various aspects of reality.

Therefore, as I mentioned earlier, many, including Peripatetics and others with differing opinions on this matter, vehemently oppose and condemn our religious beliefs, considering them profane. They do so even with those who do not challenge these beliefs, claiming the right to do so. Their standpoint and views diverge significantly from those of our theologians, who, enlightened by the light of faith, have convincingly demonstrated that our true beliefs regarding these entities, as mentioned previously, are not in conflict with sound doctrine. Therefore, those who align themselves with Epicureans, Peripatetics, and certain heretics on this matter, boldly denying not only the immortality of the soul but also the resurrection of the body (much like the Sadducees), should be disregarded and held in low regard. Our task is to establish the nature and power of these entities in accordance with the beliefs of the Stoics and Platonists and to embrace them firmly, just as the Arabs and the Hebrews do, supported by our faith and superior demonstrations.

Indeed, evidence of this can be found both in the Old Testament, such as in Genesis with metaphors and the serpent speaking to Eve, as well as in the Book of Job. It is also present in the New Testament, as in Matthew, where it is written, "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels," and in numerous other passages. Hence, it is clear that demons, in their natural state, exist (as the proverb goes) for mockery and for barbers.

Regarding these spirits, it's worth noting that they significantly differ from the descriptions of the Platonists, so let's explore this distinction. Philosophers argue that the Greek word "Daimon" encompasses both good and evil angels and does not inherently degrade either category. Consequently, they often use terms like "eudaimones" (blessed) and "kakodaimones" (evil spirits). However, our theologians vehemently disagree with this perspective, finding such terminology to be both uninformed and offensive. They contend that, even though this term may have been applied to these spirits at the time of their creation, much like it was to all angels due to their shared nature, there's never been evidence that the blessed spirits, whether among the Hebrews or in our theological tradition, are associated with this term. In fact, this term has been ascribed to them not because of

their nature but due to their own wickedness and the alleged defamation of our original ancestors. This is why they are also referred to as "Devils," and this nomenclature is not without justification, as we will elucidate shortly. All our erudite scholars have concurred on this matter.

Therefore, it's not surprising that this name, considered evil, has never been welcomed by devout ears. This shouldn't astonish us, as knowledge has revealed the existence of wicked and depraved beings, leaving no room for doubt. Among these entities, there exists a gift that bestows eternal life, not by any merit of their own. Furthermore, it's not solely these spirits that go by the name "wicked"; they've adopted various titles and labels to cast numerous slanders upon us.

Nevertheless, whether more directly related or used metaphorically, all of these names and designations serve to identify them as our adversaries, as wicked, evil, impious, and cruel. Consequently, even those under the protection of exorcism shun their names and seek to distance themselves from these malevolent entities. The discussion of each of these beings in their appropriate contexts remains to be addressed.

Regarding demons and their nature, not only did all the ancient pagan theologians disagree with our beliefs in every aspect, but this is an opportunity to briefly mention their errors, as it would be more appropriate. Among the various opinions on this subject, one view held by some who have written about it deserves attention. They believe that their perspective, illuminated by both their deeds and their faith in various aspects of these entities, shines with a semblance of truth.

According to this opinion, which is particularly popular among modern thinkers (although not all of them are entirely aligned in their views), demons are indeed spiritual beings created by the most supreme God. They possess superior intellect, are entirely incorporeal, and are immortal. However, they have chosen to become evil through their own volition, driven by madness, devoid of reason, consumed by irrational desires, and prone to hasty and reckless thoughts.

In this context, it becomes evident how far Plato and his follower Porphyry have erred. Plato openly suggests that demons are ethereal spirits covered by a thin, star-like spherical body, while Porphyry, among the doctrines of his sect that are not commonly accepted, asserts that they belong to the same category and possess a deceitful and uniform nature that mimics gods. However, what Plato believed is proven false, either through their actions, which, as philosophers claim, follow their nature, or because, despite appearances, they engage in actions that are truer than themselves.

Furthermore, it is demonstrated to be the second most significant error of all when the claim is made, as some heretics have proposed, that these spirits did not originate from darkness to evil. For nothing evil can exist as a fundamental principle in the world. Nor can there be two omnipotent beings, as it is nonsensical to assert, for indeed, everything that is visible or beyond the comprehension of sight emanates from a single source. There is one ultimate cause of all things, and since it is supremely good, no evil can stem from it.

Hence, as Manes believed, there is no supreme evil inherent in the nature of things. As God beheld everything He had created, and it was exceedingly good, it follows that demons, as they become, are not evil by nature but by their own volition. The enduring malevolence and deceitfulness of these beings, stemming from their own fallacy, were concealed by the Egyptians, who encoded many secrets in certain hieroglyphs, which Scaliger depicted as containing something imperfect.

From these insights, dear and pious reader, it can be deduced that the spiritual essence of demons was originally created as perfect by God. However, they subsequently became corrupted and fell into depraved thinking, as will become abundantly clear in the ensuing discussion. Therefore, considering the times, it is imperative that we adhere rigorously to the established order in all matters, to faithfully present what our theologians believed about their creation.

Some argue that if demons were created through a simple emanation without any temporal gap or interruption in motion, then they were not coeternal with

God. To suggest that they emanated from God's eternal essence, a belief akin to Philo the philosopher's ideas about the creation of the world, is far from acceptable. When they came into existence, it was solely due to God's will, outside His divine essence. He brought them forth and shaped them, much like He did with the angels, wherever and whenever He saw fit. They did not beget one another, as some Kabbalists have speculated, an opinion that Avicenna, a highly erudite figure among the Arabs, seemed to hold firmly when discussing intelligences. Creation itself, which requires infinite power, could not possibly be imparted to finite creatures in any way. Otherwise, it would mean that God required the same power as His creations, a notion too absurd to entertain.

They were not created from some corrupt matter on the left side, as the Talmudists strangely imagine them to be, akin to frogs and flies arising from putrid substances. They are intellectual beings, as will be demonstrated, devoid of any material. Therefore, they cannot die, as erroneously believed by certain philosophers and even Arabs, as will be discussed later when they were deceived by these spirits. There are also no evil souls, as postulated by the philosopher Plotinus, a view that Tertullian appears to subscribe to. All beings were created ex nihilo by God's sovereign command, as previously explained.

Their purpose differs significantly from souls that require bodies for manifestation, but this came into play after the constitution of this world. Most Greeks believed that this spiritual nature had become corporeal many centuries ago, but this is unlikely. God, whose works are perfect, would not have created an angelic nature separate from the corporeal world. To suggest otherwise would imply the existence of an imperfect part of the world, a notion that is absurd and profane even to contemplate, let alone utter.

However, as I mentioned, they were created under the designation of "heaven" on the first day, which is indeed more accurate. Even the rich Scripture itself attests to this when it states, "When the stars were made, the angelic beings praised Me." Anyone moderately familiar with sacred literature would thoroughly understand that the stars were created on the fourth day. If that's the case, wouldn't it have been necessary for the angels to

be created at the same time? Certainly, it must have been, for how could they have praised God when they didn't even exist?

It's not sufficient to claim they were created on the second or third day, as there's no mention of them whatsoever on those days in the sacred text. Therefore, it remains consistent with what was previously stated that they were created on the first day under the term "heaven." This is especially supported by the Prophet's words, "He made the heavens in understanding." Many, who are far from ordinary, interpret this to mean that intelligences, which were created alongside the heavens at the outset to set them in motion and infuse virtues into them, were indeed necessary.

Having thus explained these matters, albeit briefly, I have no doubt that we now possess a clearer understanding of what most Latin theologians have contemplated regarding the creation of these beings. This understanding is also confirmed by the eternal truth itself, as affirmed by the Church.

Now, with careful attention to maintaining the order of exposition, which is especially important in elucidating complex subjects, it remains for us to clarify, as comprehensively as possible, how these beings were created. They were created, therefore, in a manner similar to all the other good and perfect angels. However, they did not all receive the same level of perfection, although there was no envy among them regarding this matter. They were content with their nature, according to their own capacities.

This nature, distinct from material substance, is affirmed by both Hebrew and Platonic traditions to be devoid of matter. They acknowledge that these spirits are entirely immaterial, that they do not possess matter as we do, composed of different substances with opposing qualities and desires for them. Due to their heavenly condition, they are by no means subject to continuous corruption, as our material nature is.

Given the significant disparity between their nature and operation—being completely incorporeal and existing solely in intellect, as will be abundantly demonstrated later—and considering the authority of Dionysius, who asserts that they shun all matter, it is not surprising that many theologians, not to be

disregarded, reject and expel from their ranks those who hold contrary views, considering them wholly ignorant. However, it is important to note that theologians themselves do not lack differences and disputes among them. They maintain two different and separate opinions. According to Thomas, they argue that these beings only differ in form, and they often disagree with those who follow Scotus. Many respected theologians, who seem to hold similar views, assert that there is nothing inherently absurd or contradictory in the idea of many of these spirits existing under a single form, each possessing its own indivisible nature. They contend that all these spirits, while sharing the same form without multiple species, differ from one another, mutually, and that the nature of one form causes all souls to differ from one another, varying in their internal degrees of essence from the very moment of their creation, without the need for diverse forms and multiplicity.

As for which of these opinions might be considered more plausible, I am pleased to add that, considering the diverse talents bestowed upon them from the outset, it does not align with the natural order to have such a wide array of angelic species, both intellectual and glorious, coexisting in the world, while the demons are eternally condemned in Tartarus. If one species were lacking, it could rightfully be deemed an imperfection, both in the corporeal and sensible realms, in the world created in the likeness and image of God, as they say.

Moreover, this argument gains more weight when we consider that, from all nations, languages, and arts, many among humanity are saved from eternal torment by God's grace. These demons, although they were all created as indivisible, immortal spirits, equal to the angels in their nature, have fallen from the angelic orders, as will be explained later. Among the angelic orders, there exists a variety of forms, where some differ from others in both appearance and power. This difference, however great it may be, is not hidden from God, who created all things with precision, measurement, and order.

Yet, from our perspective, we know that, although there are three classes of angels, neither a superior nature nor a weaker spirit would allow these beings to experience any infirmity. Lesser wisdom would not permit them to be

ignorant, nor would lesser freedom impose any necessity for them to fall. Instead, from this variety among them, which exists in the intellectual world, something wondrous and extraordinary has flowed forth into this present world, thanks to the diversity of sensible things that serves as its beauty and adornment.

This great diversity of natures has yielded nothing less than perfection, and they have no just cause to complain about their Creator. Even though, in nature, the more superior one is, the fewer species of things they understand, and the greater virtue they possess, the virtue inherent in each one of them is so great that nothing else could be added to their perfection, which their nature could comprehend, without altering their respective forms. Each one of them refuses and rejects such changes due to the inherent destruction they entail.

In this manner, all the demons, just like the other angels, were originally created in a state of natural happiness, each according to their own capacity. They possessed such a level of natural perfection that they could have remained in this state entirely if they had chosen to do so. Despite their flexible nature and freedom of choice in determining their course of action, there was no inherent reason for them to fall. Therefore, their fall was entirely a result of their own wrongdoing and guilt, as they had the strength to stand firm but chose not to use it.

Had they remained in their original state, they would have been bestowed with great and sublime gifts from above. They would have attained ultimate happiness, which is not predetermined by their nature but is the same ultimate goal as that of the angels. They would have been granted admission into the divine essence, enjoying the same vision as the angels. Moreover, due to their higher nature and the grace they had acquired, they might have received a distinct grace surpassing that of the angels.

However, due to their instability, the spirits who followed Lucifer—the name referring to his superior nature—and his accomplices, who consented to his reckless pride, voluntarily followed him into this disastrous error. Driven by excessive pride, consumed by poisonous madness and frenzy, they were

overwhelmed by envy when Lucifer, owing to his more excellent nature, possessed the privilege of contemplating the essence of various beings. In this contemplation, he perceived that the substance of all other beings was fairer and more excellent than his own.

Corrupting his own intellectual understanding, which remained unaffected by any sensible disturbances (as it could not be influenced by such disturbances), he audaciously proclaimed, "I will set my throne in the north, and I will be like the Most High." This sin, indeed, the gravest of all sins, the most abhorrent crime, the detestable transgression, and the blasphemous act, was committed willingly and of his own volition when no other suggestion or temptation had been presented.

Whether this account is entirely accurate remains a contentious point of debate among theologians, as is commonly acknowledged.

Indeed, some argue that the demon was initially created content with the nature he had been endowed with, and he was intended to attain the ultimate grace. However, he rejected happiness for an extended period. On the other hand, others believe that he came to think he derived his strength not from God, the eternal source of all good things, but from himself. He convinced himself of this and considered it a certainty. It is said that this belief caused his mutable nature to become unchangeable in sin. Nonetheless, he willingly clung to evil, effectively making himself immutable in that state.

Some hold the view that he either omitted certain actions or, relying on his own abilities, attempted to achieve what he could have obtained through grace. Others argue that his sin lay in attempting to claim the position of the Messiah for himself. This is because, as the narrative goes, when he recognized his superiority in nature to all others, he fervently desired that, for his sake, all others should attain glory in the presence of God. However, they assert that this desire led to his significant sin, supported by various arguments. They claim that, since he foresaw the divine splendor that the will of the Most High intended to incarnate through the revelation of a particular divine light, which was to come for the purpose of our redemption, he began to venerate it.

The fact that God's most holy essence would be incarnated implies the necessity of our redemption. Otherwise, he would not have been able to affect us more profoundly with his humanity than with his divinity alone. He venerated this divine light, just as the other angels did. However, due to his pride in his own nature, he repeatedly withdrew from this veneration. Those who adhere to Scotus's views depart less from this interpretation. They assert that his sin lay in the restlessness and perversion of his desires when he challenged the equality and omnipotence of God.

However, it is crucial to note that this equality and omnipotence relate to a concept that signifies no dispute, even though it can never be communicated to any creature. The restlessness and perversion of his desires undoubtedly stemmed from his own perverted will. Given the excellence of his essence, he should have loved God even more and humbled himself before all others. He should have offered eternal thanks to God, which, it seems to me, he openly expressed here on earth when he eagerly sought his unique worship.

Indeed, many theologians find it easier to embrace this opinion because it aligns with the truth itself. Therefore, it is believed that this heinous and abominable crime and sin have led to significant disputes among them, primarily because of the differing wills of the angels, both good and evil.

When Michael, the leader of the good angels, resisted the Dragon (for Lucifer, the prince of the evil ones, is referred to by this name due to the poisonous influence he spread among the others), a fierce battle erupted between them. It is important to note that this battle did not involve physical weapons, as they are spirits entirely devoid of corporeal matter (as will be explained in its proper context). They cannot be torn apart by the nature of the heavens, although they are capable of passing through the various reflections of the spectrum, much like rays of sunlight.

The Dragon, owing to his perverse and wicked nature, was rejected and condemned by all, even by those of his own kind who were ungrateful and proud. This led to a rebellion among them, which became evident outwardly and was sanctioned by all the evil angels. They were so universally rejected

and condemned by all the good angels that, as both sides fiercely contended, the faction of the evil ones was ultimately weakened. They relied on their own strength and were so enfeebled by the living faith infused from above—possibly due to the advent of the Messiah or perhaps because of the great and true goodness of the Supreme God—that even the lesser among the good angels could have expelled and defeated them from heaven. Nature is entirely overcome by grace.

However, theologians continue to debate where in heaven this battle took place and how long it lasted. Many hold diverse opinions on this matter. Some, influenced by the authority of Ezekiel, who speaks of the Devil being in the delights of God and, due to the likeness of terrestrial Adam sinning, persuasively argue that this battle occurred in the Empyrean heaven, which is the dwelling place of blessed spirits and their joys.

Others, among whom Saint Augustine appears to have been the first, openly assert that this battle of the angels took place in the highest region of the air, sometimes referred to as the heavens. However, if I may express my opinion, I would not dare to affirm that this battle occurred in either of these locations. In fact, unless I were to overlook it with my eyes closed (as the saying goes), it seems quite clear to me that this event happened in the air, a realm that initially suited the angels due to its corruptibility and mutability, despite their incorruptible nature. Later, some of them were assigned and confined to this region as a form of punishment and ignoble exercise. Neither the Empyrean heaven, which pertains to glory rather than nature due to its supernatural and surpassing excellence, nor what is mentioned by Ezekiel, appears to contradict my viewpoint. Ezekiel's words do not seem to refer to the quality of a place, just as our Savior's promise on the cross to the thief, "Today you will be with me in Paradise," does not necessarily indicate a location but rather a condition and state. In this sense, Lucifer, due to his loftier status than all other creatures, could contemplate God with great delight because of the excellence of his own essence.

What is more likely to support our view is that the prideful Devil, driven by his arrogance, declared, "I will ascend to the heavens; I will set my throne above the stars." If this battle had taken place in the Empyrean heaven, to

which heavenly location do these words refer? Since there is no higher place, should we interpret them allegorically? Certainly not, as the literal sense, wherever it can be extracted, should be adhered to. Therefore, this battle did not take place there, but rather in the firmament, which, relying on John's authority, I consider aptly described. In his Apocalypse, he stated that the Dragon, our ancient adversary, drew a third of the stars with him. Nothing could be more fitting than this heaven for the angels to demonstrate their own movable and incorruptible nature by moving without suffering corruption themselves. This event led to the angels' triumph in one place, where they obtained victory without dispute, and to the demons' enduring the most atrocious punishments and eternal, endless torments in another. Just as the angels took the place of Paradise, the demons found themselves in the infernal realm simultaneously and not unjustly.

Theologians have not yet reached a consensus regarding how long these spirits remained in heaven and how long they contended with the angels. Those who are unwavering devotees of St. Thomas, celebrated among theologians as much as among philosophers and almost regarded as a second Aristotle, hold the view that there were only two distinct phases from their creation to their fall. The first phase involved their creation with pure natural qualities only, and the second phase occurred when they became subject to sin and were cast out of heaven by the ministry of the angels who were confirmed by grace.

However, not all scholars are bound by such unyielding allegiance to this master, as if they were deprived of their own judgment and opinion. They are divided into two camps. Some follow their leader, John Duns Scotus (who earned the nickname "Subtle" not without reason), and assert that there were four intervals between their creation and their fall. Some even attempt, through various arguments, to reduce this number to three. According to this perspective, the first interval, during which all of them were content with the natural gifts bestowed upon them, was followed by the second interval, which lasted as long as the entire duration of our existence. During this second interval, some claim that they turned away from the truth to such an extent that, despite committing the initial sin and being excessively filled with self-love, they could have still repented sufficiently and easily obtained God's

mercy, forgiveness, and the grace that He generously extends to His works through His kindness and patience, provided they were still on the path of repentance.

Despite the disagreements among theologians, who vehemently argue that no sin worthy of forgiveness could have occurred in this state of innocence, it is important to consider that no creature had fallen into corruption at that time. It can be acknowledged that sin was introduced into the world in a collective manner, similar to Pandora's box being opened by Epimetheus. However, the argument made by some theologians, that nothing could have warranted forgiveness during this period, appears to have merit, particularly in light of the free will of the angels. This perspective was shared by several theologians who believed that until the final moment leading to their damnation, it was appropriate for the angels not to have committed a sin deserving of forgiveness. They contended that a spiritual creature of such nobility should not have abruptly fallen into eternal torment, especially since every created being, inherently mutable, possesses the potential for error. This is especially relevant when considering that, as Scripture suggests, even God found change in His own angels.

However, the demons, as we will proceed to narrate, extended their defiance of their Creator's will beyond what was just and right. Their excessive self-love and folly persisted in this second interval to such an extent that, in God's most just judgment, they remained obstinate in their rebellion, refusing to give glory to another. They continued to resist God's commands with unyielding pride. Ultimately, in the third interval, through God's most just judgment and His merciful disposition tempered with justice, they were all damned, without any excuse whatsoever. This judgment and sentence were not hastily delivered but were the result of God's supremely fair patience and justice, tempered with His own mercy.

Furthermore, it is important to note that these demons were not merely guilty of a single transgression, as some might think. Instead, they were culpable for a multitude of sins, with each demon driven by their own unique malice and an indescribable desire for evil. They became entangled in various forms of wickedness and criminal acts, gradually escalating from lesser to more

heinous offenses. This progression continued to the point where, although not all to the same extent due to variations in their inherent nature, they all shared an insatiable appetite for sin. They indulged in diverse forms of depravity, and their disobedience was fueled by ceaseless evil desires, leading them into an infinite spiral of wickedness. As a result, they ultimately fell into the most profound contempt and hatred of God, a truly horrifying condition. In this state, they were scattered and shattered in such a way that there was no possibility of redemption, and they were unable to restore themselves to a state of integrity.

Consequently, after the final and disastrous event, the demons were cast out of heaven, much like lead sinks in water, through the agency of the angels, as previously mentioned. Their descent was marked by the utmost disgrace and ignominy, and they were precipitated into the depths, where they often endured relentless torment from internal, eternal worms. Many of them, as alluded to by the divine James, remain closely associated with this dark and frigid atmosphere. God, in His marvelous and infinite providence, permits this for the purpose of exercising His inscrutable wisdom and awakening us from our spiritual slumber to instill the fear of God within us. This state persists until the great day of the Lord, ensuring that they are not left there without reason. At times, God employs them to carry out His divine justice upon us humans, as will be elaborated upon in subsequent discussions.

All those consigned to the confines of this air are considered inferior. The more powerful ones, owing to their inherent nobility and the heightened intensity of their rebellion against God, were cast down to the deepest depths of Tartarus, alongside their leader, the Dragon. This leader, inflated beyond his comrades by the venom of foolish pride, had been initially elevated to a loftier state through God's bestowal of nobility, only to serve as a vessel for the most disgraceful acts and everlasting torments. This elevation wasn't without reason, for he had lost his sense of measure due to his overwhelming pride, and now, he endures the severest suffering, an apt punishment that corresponds to his deeds as determined by God's most just judgment.

However, the extent of the fall and whether they all belonged to a single order or different ones remain subjects of considerable debate among

theologians. Some, considering that a much larger number of humans are destined for torment in hell alongside the devils compared to those who will experience celestial joy with the angels, have surmised a parallel fate for the angels themselves. Consequently, they infer that a greater multitude of angels has been cast down into hell. On the other hand, there are those with a more balanced perspective (as my opinion suggests), who focus on the inherent goodness present in these spirits, capable of purer understanding. They believe that, for this reason, a smaller portion of them fell due to this lapse. This opinion, which appears more appropriate and thus more deserving of acceptance in my view, prevails. Nevertheless, the question of how many of them were precipitated from heaven remains a subject of varying opinions.

There are varying opinions on the proportion of fallen angels who are guilty of this crime. Some claim it to be one-tenth, while others argue for one-ninth being subject to eternal punishment. Quite a few believe that the third host of angels faced damnation. These differing views, often supported by the authority of Saint John, who states, "The Dragon drew with his tail a third part of the stars," are prevalent. However, the debate among Greek and Latin theologians centers not on the glory of their state or even, as many believe, the conditions of their merits. Instead, the discussion revolves around whether this judgment affected the lower orders, the higher orders, or a mixed group encompassing all of them.

Some individuals have suggested that, considering the disposition of these spirits in relation to matter, angels, including their leader, Lucifer (whom they call by this name to allude to the truth), were cast down from a lower position. They draw a parallel with certain Platonists who claim that evil spirits (Cacodæmones) used matter as a means of rebellion. However, in our perspective, as we attribute nothing material to them, we believe that they all fell from their respective orders. While some argue that more of the lower-order angels were cast down due to their less noble and superior nature, we deny that the devil, along with some others of a more excellent essence, belonged to a lower class. Many theologians have affirmed that he is, in fact, the worst of all, and not without reason, as the chief of all the others. Some point to Ezekiel's words: "You were the anointed Cherub who covers; and I have set you so." Many theologians hold this view, asserting that Saint John

also calls him the dragon due to his superior knowledge, which he possessed by nature, easily surpassing all others. However, if God's fervor had not distorted him due to his perverse will, he would undoubtedly have been called by another name. He lost the love that was entirely contrary to him, and as the diametrically opposite of love, he could neither persevere nor exist. This is why, while reproaching the noble essence of the devil, he cannot be called by any other name.

Furthermore, their strong belief that the devil opposed all good from the beginning and fought against eternal truth is not explicitly found in sacred scriptures concerning the Seraphic order. However, this can be inferred sufficiently by those who carefully examine sacred scripture. Even from the same prophet, when describing his downfall, it is said: "How you have fallen from heaven, O Lucifer," and the following words strongly imply that this head, the worst of all, cannot be referred to anything other than the highest of all orders in which he was created by divine will. This is particularly true because of the greatness of the star, its brilliant light, and its association with the greater and nobler part of the day. His abominable crime, as grave as the others or perhaps even greater, did not prevent him from experiencing some degree of remorse. Nevertheless, due to this most heinous crime, he and others were cast down from heaven. Some were banished to the dark and cold region of the atmosphere, as mentioned earlier, while others were condemned to the deepest depths of hell, subjected to the utmost disgrace and eternal torment.

They were greatly debased, suffering the extreme coldness of darkness and enduring eternal torture, living in a state beyond human comprehension. However, they continue to descend further into misery, becoming increasingly terrifying and predictable, bound so tightly to sin that they take pleasure in it, blinded by their desires, and committing only evil. This doesn't occur solely because demons perceive everything through their intellect, as we comprehend fundamental principles through our intellect, but also because divine wisdom has chosen to maintain this order, where they deservedly endure more extensive and severe punishments for an extended duration.

BOOK II

Having provided this concise introduction, I believe we can now delve into not only the name and nature of the fall of the most wretched demon but also the causes behind each aspect, which should become clear to every reader. As we have discussed, a portion of these fallen beings was cast into the deepest abysses of Tartarus, while a more substantial part remained in this obscure and cold atmosphere that surrounds us. They acquired various desires and abilities, engaging in different forms of experimentation with various crimes, for which they felt no remorse whatsoever, not even the slightest trace. In fact, they completely abandoned hope of achieving anything in heaven and instead sought to accomplish their objectives here on earth, relying on all the subtlety and artifice at their disposal.

Hence, it happened that when they first saw Adam, already created and formed, they left no stone unturned, so to speak. With the help of others, Lucifer, like Vertumnus transforming himself into various wonders of nature, simulated the appearance of a serpent, and ensnared Eve, his companion, through his poisonous cunning. Through this conspiracy, he made his partner, a creation of God, the author of defection, which is truly lamentable.

The term "Draco" is derived from the Greek word for serpent, which played a pivotal role in Eve's seduction. No other creature, apart from the serpent itself, with its terrifying appearance, was allowed to approach her. Nor was any other sign permitted to convey her intentions as clearly as this creature. This restriction stemmed from the fact that our first parents, upon seeing the serpent, seemingly forewarned, became more cautious for themselves and their descendants. They were particularly vigilant in avoiding the grave evil that the Lord Himself had predicted would befall them if they disregarded His command.

Moreover, the demons, by taking on this role – not so much harsh as it was miserable and dreadful – opposed God not only out of defiance but also out

of envy. They witnessed human beings created in their state of innocence and recognized the future glory they could attain if they remained steadfast, confirmed by divine grace. With this grace, the demons could potentially surpass humans in terms of true and eternal happiness and honor. Yet, they also feared that humanity, situated in the very positions from which the demons had been cast out with utter disgrace and for all eternity, would never forget the highest, everlasting, glorious, and honorable status they were destined for. This led to their discontent and murmurs.

The profound impact of this matter on their thoughts, and the intense pain and jealousy it aroused, especially in those spirits driven solely by foolish pride, cannot be easily conveyed. It elevated and inflated them to the point of bursting. Consequently, they became inflamed with immense hatred, rage, and frenzy against God and His act of creation, fueled by their deranged beliefs. They spiraled into a terrifying madness, where everything they plotted and their most wicked deeds seemed driven by this obsession: as if their sole purpose was to strip God of His divine honor and wrongfully claim it for themselves, using any means at their disposal.

When Lucifer realized that this burning hatred against God was futile and that he would only spew out his own venom in vain, he shifted his focus to God's creation. He turned his attention to our first mother, Eve, in the terrestrial paradise, perceiving her as a more vulnerable being. He employed cunning flattery and persuasion, tempting her with the fruit that, although outwardly beautiful, was the most wretched thing in the world. This fruit stood as the primary and chief source of all the world's ills, including death in all its forms, which infested both land and sea, as well as the eternal and unending demise of all living creatures.

While it may appear evident from this incident that Lucifer, through his initial seduction, brought about eternal and universal damnation for both Adam and the entire human race, it's also clear that, due to the surpassing paternal piety and providence of Almighty God, the devil's influence was not allowed to reach the extent of his original intentions or firm self-promises. When it came to confronting Adam, even though he had sinned later, Lucifer initially hesitated. Unfortunately, he succeeded with Eve, who was a more

vulnerable creation of God.

In truth, Adam, the origin of a nobler nature and a great marvel of the entire human race, was not deceived primarily by the serpent but through the persuasion of his own wife. He became a participant in the punishment ordained by God's divine justice, yet his unfathomable mercy, which, in a sense, surpasses even Himself, and is always balanced by divine justice, remained present. This evil, for which only eternal death seemed to be the atonement for others, did not cease to afflict him. However, not long after the first promises emanated from the eternal Father, the true Samaritan did not cease to heal. To the extent that no one, except infants deprived of the vision of God due to this evil, and individuals undergoing punishment for their own sins in Tartarus, is destined to perish eternally.

The Devil himself, along with his accomplices, did not escape punishment for this heinous crime. Condemned by God, they were sentenced to endure the most severe torments for all eternity. Additionally, it was decreed that the seed of the woman would crush the serpent's head, a divine sign prefigured by the mystery of the skin. Our ancestors were commanded to cover themselves with this skin, concealing their nakedness, knowing deep within that their transgression would eventually be covered and atoned for, bringing immense joy to their souls.

Even in moments of extreme despair, when driven to the depths of eternal desolation by overwhelming sorrow, they found solace in the special illumination of an angel. Some more secretive theologians claim this angel to be Raziel, bearing the image of the pure and immaculate Lamb. When the Devil realized that his efforts were not yielding the results he desired, he experienced even greater sorrow and anguish. Nevertheless, as the instigator of our transgression, he possessed some power over us, not insignificant in nature. He left no opportunity unused to exert this power, employing various tactics, sometimes targeting our physical bodies and at other times aiming at those covered with the skin and blood of the Lamb.

Satan, known by that name due to his perpetual opposition to us, incites one to commit one evil and another to commit a different sin. He observes that

the nature of each individual is inclined towards wrongdoing by itself. The demons' varied and diverse abilities to harm us do not stem so much from the superiority of their forms, as some believe, but rather, as others posit, from their various and cunning efforts. While they were still in heaven, they were more inclined towards these sins and crimes than righteous deeds, driven by their own desires.

It is indeed God's just decree that the more vehemently they were carried away by their own willful desire to sin against God, the more fervently they assail us by constantly perpetrating sins, showing themselves more ungrateful to their Creator. For this reason, they are subjected to more severe punishment, eternal torment, and various types of torture, consigned to Tartarus, where they inflict upon us a multitude of torments and forms of punishment.

However, the power of demons to influence us and their relentless pursuit of seduction are limited by the boundaries and prisons established by God, reflecting both His mercy and justice. God ensures that no faithful follower or obedient adherent of His word is tempted beyond their capacity. He has entrusted individual angels with varying degrees of dignity to manage diverse temptations.

These angels, though not dissimilar to their state before their fall, now serve the devil as the lowliest of servants, greatly reduced in status. Their ancient pride, growing day by day, compels them to mimic human actions, but in an impossible and debased manner, making themselves even more despicable than humans. This is vividly illustrated in the third sign performed by Pharaoh's magicians, which they attempted openly in broad daylight.

The specific details of these occurrences and their timing are beyond the comprehension of weak human nature. It suffices for us to understand that demons, despite their past grievous sins, are now restrained from committing even worse ones. These very demons, from the moment of their creation and their emergence into the light, and even in the mother's womb, harbor intense enmity toward us.

The Latin poets have referred to them as "evil geniuses" because they mistakenly believed these spirits were born alongside us. They reckon that, due to the original sin, they are granted various opportunities to harm us, depending on their greater or lesser malice. Often, without the assistance of the angels, we find ourselves uncertain about whether we might become their victims. However, when we achieve victory over them (which we know many saints of God have accomplished), it is rightly attributed to the aid of divine grace and the protection of pure angels.

Certainly, for us, who can never rival the ancient adversary, the Dragon, either through strategy or our own efforts, divine assistance is always indispensable. Without it, we would surely be defeated. Even though these malevolent spirits have fallen from the lowest orders of angels, except for the one who tempted our first parents in the terrestrial paradise and in the desert, they should have confronted Christ during temptation, recognizing Him as the highest subject of their tests.

There exist two principles of an innocent state: one involving grace, which is immune to servitude. In this, a state of grace was established in such a way that even though sin could potentially happen, it never would. In the other principle, the nature was such that sin was impossible. Therefore, it's not surprising that these spirits often assume the form of those they tempt. However, their power of temptation is not equal among themselves. Just as in human souls, there's a variety in their forms stemming from internal gradations of their essence, which results in the magnitude and diversity of their efforts in sinning.

This is reinforced by the fact that nothing absurd can arise from this situation, and the order of things seems to necessitate it. Just as those destined for greater glory, such as many blessed individuals and saints, excel in virtue despite sharing the same form (except for their assigned roles), those who preside over greater misery, like apostates, heresiarchs, pedagogues, and others of their ilk, attract demons of the same species—thoroughly wicked. This aligns with the reasoning and doctrine taught elsewhere.

This leads to the occurrence where individuals assigned a particular office, in

addition to their guardian angel, also attract a demon, one aligned with a vice they are naturally inclined towards. This demon is intended to challenge them, often possessing their pride, and the engagement takes place provided that individuals do not resist. These impure spirits readily collaborate with each other, as it aids them in achieving their desires more easily. Typically, they commence their harm to our bodies shortly after our birth, as many believe, unless preventative measures are taken. However, they do not harm our souls until our free will begins to govern us, which usually happens around the age of seven.

This timing is not arbitrary, as these highly cunning and astute spirits engage with us strategically. They assume victory in advance, aware of our weaknesses and our inclination to sin due to our original sin. They exploit the qualities and passions of our souls, influenced by the constitution of our parents, our own habits, and our individual natures. For example, they may manipulate someone's character by attributing Saturnine qualities and malevolent, cruel Mars influences, claiming that these individuals had witnessed Venus in retrograde and that neither the Moon nor the Sun had favorably shone in their horoscope.

These spirits excel in various human matters, including astrology and other disciplines, thanks to their sharp intellect and extensive experience. This expertise allows them to understand the workings of nature and the specific inclinations of individuals so well that they often led them to deceive themselves. Hence, the less overt effort they exert to ensnare and bewilder us with their traps, the more cunningly they impose the order of their designs upon us.

For they recognize that individuals prone to anger and rage are more susceptible to their influence, and thus, ethereal spirits are drawn into this endeavor. Some refer to them as ethereal not because they have any connection with the material elements – what, after all, does a spirit have to do with material elements? The answer is quite simple: nothing. Otherwise, we would witness the bizarre spectacle of bodies transforming into spirits and then into others, a concept utterly absurd as they lack any shared nature for natural interaction. Thus, these spirits are not designated as ethereal due to

any analogy with the elements, as some philosophers have mistakenly asserted. Instead, it's their abode within the realms of the elements that earn them this title.

Nevertheless, they are not so tethered to the misty air that they remain immobilized. On the contrary, they frequently traverse the interstitial spaces between the elements, seizing opportunities with their myriad malevolent arts. Their contact pollutes and defiles everything they encounter, much akin to the infernal Harpies depicted by poets.

As for those whom nature has observed to be particularly afflicted by the vice of ambition, these spirits target them through the phlegmatic air. They stir individuals who are sluggish with lethargy and driven by lust, exerting their influence through watery humors. Those consumed by avarice and dark desires of possession are relentlessly tormented by terrestrial bile. Among these spirits, those who hold a peculiar position and distinction due to their unique placement are referred to as serpentine, named after their distinctive environment.

Hence, it comes to pass that those who aim to entice us into various forms of defection and apostasy from our Creator, God, have derived their designation from the North, a region long regarded by Kabbalists as sinister and inauspicious. However, they do not originate from the celestial North, where their prince Lucifer asserted his self-sufficiency, but rather from the earthly North. Alongside other malevolent spirits, Lucifer was cast out of heaven like a flash of lightning due to his crimes. Among these fallen beings, some claim, are the leaders of the Jewish sect known as the Mekubalim, notorious for their wickedness.

Conversely, those from the South are known as "Yod". They employ their allurements to gain power over us. This category of demons, much like their terrestrial counterparts, is among the most malevolent and often wields significant influence to achieve their objectives. We are instructed in this matter by the example of David, who urges us to offer continuous prayers and supplications to God, entreating Him to shield us from the snares and machinations of these demons. He declares, "From the wicked that oppress

me, from my deadly enemies who compass me about" (Psalm 17:9).

Another category, designated as "Eoi", entices us with divinations, a fascination innate to human minds, as seen in Adam himself. By indulging in these curiosities and relinquishing the reins on our desire to foresee the future, we undoubtedly fall into sin. Among them, some excel in boasting, pretense, and a myriad of deceitful tricks. Yet, their primary aim is often to lead people into wrongdoing, driving them towards despair and casting shadows of deception over the straight path of reason. These are known as "Occidui". It is through God's astonishing and concealed judgment that they are granted the power to torment us daily, sometimes even at each new moon, though not all at once.

In these ongoing battles against temptation, it should come as no surprise that, even if defeated ten times a day, we would succumb to such a cunning adversary without the support and elevation provided by divine assistance.

In His paternal love for us, God has wisely structured this situation in a way that the spirits themselves, bound by their own essence, cannot constantly disrupt our souls with malicious intent. This design ensures that they leave no stone unturned in their efforts, both externally and internally, as they diligently execute their plans. Through this mechanism, God withholds the power that allows them to assail us when we are tainted by sin. Consequently, these spirits often provoke various disturbances in our minds, corrupt our thoughts, and bend our fantasies to their perverse will. They achieve this through various phantasmal movements and by stirring our inner desires.

However, all these tactics yield little or nothing if we do not choose to yield to our corrupted desires. With the aid of Almighty God and the unwavering watch of the holy angels guarding us, we must courageously resist, as advocated by the Apostle. These guardians of ours cannot forcibly lead anyone who stands firm against them, but they can willingly guide those who indulge in sin and follow their own desires.

However, the reason why they do not consistently tempt us with the same sins, as I mentioned earlier, can be attributed to the physical aspect. They are

somewhat constrained by the nature of the heavenly virtues that they perceive as more favorable to our bodies. Moreover, their primary restraint comes from the vigilance of the holy angels, especially when they sense that we are fortified by divine grace.

This can be illustrated by the example of the diviner Balaam, who sought to curse the people of God and invoke various forms of evil and destruction upon them. He diligently sought an opposing influence of understanding from the people of Israel, allowing him to speak only what he discovered. This demonstrates that they tend to attack us more frequently in certain places than others, particularly during the night rather than the day, especially before dawn, which, according to the Hebrews, marks the beginning of the morning and the onset of daylight. Some might consider this a severe judgment. It is not surprising that demons wield greater power during this time than at any other, as they are said to thrive in darkness. This is where the phrase "powers of darkness" in sacred literature originates. They possess the unique capability and malevolence to tempt us with varying types of temptations, fueled by their fury. Their strength varies at different times of the day, much like the higher spirits, due to the shifts among the angels. These shifts occur in accordance with different times and vigils, similar to sentinels taking turns on a watchtower. This is evident from the fact that an angel wrestled with the patriarch Jacob for an extended period during the night, as he urgently sought release due to these changing vigils.

Furthermore, due to the diverse influence of the heavens and the various positions of the stars, they can exert more power in one situation than another. This is because they are born with a predisposition suitable for their wicked intentions, and changes in location greatly disrupt them, as I will explain later. It is of utmost importance for us to prevent and ward off the threats that come from them. This is evident from the angels who were sent to execute God's command and bring punishment upon Sodom. They faithfully advised Lot, who was beloved by God, to flee for his safety and change his location. Different times also create varying conditions, either favorable or adverse, for these spirits.

Hence, it is not without reason that the Holy Catholic Church, following the

custom of the Israelite people, established the practice of offering prayers to the Most High God seven times a day, albeit at set hours. Perhaps this is because this cunning adversary, among other things, is most intent on creating opportunities for us. He may set more traps for our souls, even in the briefest moments, though not uniformly, when he attacks us. After all, he is described by the Holy Spirit as a roaring lion, always seeking someone to devour. Thus, the devil is fittingly depicted as a roaring lion, as if openly preparing to attack us, and he does so with confidence.

The fact that he exerts more effort against us in darkness than in light is why our Savior, the eternal truth of the Eternal Father, instructs us to work in the light of paternal admonitions. Hence, the practice has been introduced that when someone is dying (for at that time, demons often manifest themselves to be seen by all, tempting them greatly), candles are lit, symbolizing the true light, as Simon sings, "A light from light," as a prefiguration for us. Furthermore, even the laws of the Romans themselves justifiably consider darkness as highly suspicious and dangerous. They do not allow any legal decisions to be made at night unless three or four lamps are lit to dispel the darkness.

In the presence of this light, we find that the deceptive traps set by treacherous demons are blunted and delayed, and when this light is absent, we discover an even greater inner strength. This idea is present in the teachings of many ancient Talmudists, though we should not interpret it as if demons are driven away from their mischief in the same way that sunlight can disrupt the activities of creatures in the fields.

Demons are of a different nature, and they are not affected by physical sensations in the same way. Some have suggested that demons fear punishment from this light, a belief held by certain Hebrew Mekubales and also followed by adherents of certain Arab religious beliefs. However, it is improbable that demons, wherever they may be, consistently experience the torments of the underworld. Instead, they can evade harm by seeking refuge in the dark air when they encounter this light, whether it emanates from the sun, other stars, or fire.

Nonetheless, it should not be assumed from this that demons are entirely immune to the effects of the sun's rays, celestial bodies, or elemental fire. They do perceive these, but not through physical sensation or contact. Rather, they comprehend these elements through their intellect, much as they do with the sound of ringing bells and lit torches. These are objects towards which Christian priests and followers of other religions commonly direct their prayers, especially on occasions like the Feast of Purification or in reverence of relics and similar religious items.

From all these experiences, demons recognize and perceive the immense power of divine light, which is the source of life and motion. They acknowledge the significance of Christ, who, despite being rejected and despised by the prideful, faces an eternal death to be reckoned with.

Therefore, it is not unreasonable for the Apostolic and Catholic Church to continue the use of lights, a tradition passed down through the generations. This tradition is not intended to suggest that all types of demons (there are many) are entirely driven away from causing harm by this elemental light.

Indeed, some of these demons, categorized by the Platonists into different groups, do not have such a strong aversion to this light due to its hidden properties. These are the subterranean demons. They are compelled to flee from its presence, albeit unwillingly. However, when it comes to church bells being blessed, relics of the saints being touched, or other lights being present, they remain stubbornly immovable. Unless they are more greatly terrified by the power of the highest light, they rarely cease from committing evil deeds. Instances of this have been recorded numerous times.

When these demons intend to attack us, they often seize the opportunity from our wicked thoughts, idle and obscene words, and actions that run counter to celestial influence and expel angelic protections. The purest divine presence rejoices in nothing but the purest hearts. So, when they test our essence, they assail us. We experience sudden constriction of spirits, anxiety, and a sudden madness that can be so intense it appears as if we were possessed. A profound sense of loathing for life itself can take hold of us. According to their beliefs, this is mainly caused by the secret influence of Cabalistic

judgment rather than astrology, which attributes such experiences to the aspects of the sun and stars.

However, if this type of despair were solely caused by celestial influences, it would not happen so suddenly, nor would it occur without noticeable changes or disturbances in the body, mind, and health, as is often the case. Nevertheless, it should not be denied that when demons are determined to approach us with hostile intent, they pay little attention to opportunities arising from celestial aspects. They are well aware that our bodies, tainted by the original sin, bear the consequences of their own guilt. Their primary concern is to diminish the divine influence, and for this purpose, vices themselves, rather than the stars, are the driving force.

Hence, at all times, they make strenuous efforts to tempt and oppose us, as even a just person may fall seven times a day. They ardently seek to deceive and circumvent us, driven solely by their own desires, forsaking even the fleeting happiness they imagine for themselves. True and lasting joy can never be theirs, for they are bound by the eternal fire, the undying worm, and the everlasting torments of hell. These eternal punishments haunt them with the pain of the present and the fear of the future.

This surpasses all human understanding and constitutes the most sorrowful and bitter torment. Yet, concerning their coexisting punishment, which lies in never experiencing God as the object of beatitude, the evil spirits are not affected to the extent of being consumed by the fierce flames. Instead, they endure a punishment resulting from an accident, a concept recognized among theologians. This punishment involves being confined to a place of inferior quality and greater shadow, where a denser atmosphere is more frequently observed. From there, all hope of return is completely cut off, and they suffer greater anguish due to the sins that led them to damnation.

They also face sensible fire as an instrument of divine justice for their punishment. This fire, meant for every soul throughout eternity, burns more intensely for those who have sinned more and conspired more seriously in these sins. It burns endlessly, making them the most wretched of all. Nevertheless, they do not relent in their wicked intent toward us. Therefore,

we must continually battle them, armed with the shield of living faith, beseeching God with unwavering hope, in accordance with the precept of the Prince of the Apostles, Saint Peter, to resist them courageously through faith.

The Devil comes from God to tempt us, allowing him to delve into the deepest recesses of our being where he ceaselessly plots our destruction. Therefore, he is not entirely abandoned by God; rather, he is permitted to tempt us. Often, this is for the sake of our eternal salvation rather than our perdition. However, God allows this only if we do not surrender to these temptations, if our faith remains steadfast, and if we maintain our spiritual weapons without neglect. In fact, our faith strengthens when confronted with these trials, just as iron does not rust when constantly in use. Through these challenges, the glorious power of God shines forth like a precious gem, unobscured when He rescues us from the clutches of evil spirits, whether it be in a sudden and unexpected manner or through His mighty hand.

Although the Devil never ceases to tempt humans with various kinds of temptations, he is particularly relentless in targeting the soul. He employs all his deceitful strategies in this relentless assault. This persistent attack, as exemplified in the last words of our Savior when He hung on the cross, commending His Spirit to the eternal Father with fervent heart and voice, is far from being devoid of profound mystery.

Among various temptations, one of the most significant, if not the gravest, is that after sin had invaded humanity, according to the demands of God's eternal justice, the Devil gained the power to internally assail individuals with his temptations. This power, indeed, was exercised from the very beginning of the world when Cain, one of the two brothers, dealt a horrifying and devastating blow to his soul. The name "Cain" itself, given to him in accordance with the customs of the first age, is emblematic of this reality. His terrible internal temptation led him to commit a heinous crime against his innocent brother Abel, who was beloved by God. With relentless determination, Cain sought to kill Abel, eventually resorting to a lustful murder, breaking every bond of brotherly love.

This unique cause (if it can be called a cause) was that, according to Hebrew

belief, he sought to obtain God's favor by offering a better sacrifice than Abel, aiming to send the smoke of his sacrifice to heaven rather than from the earth. Likewise, Lamech, driven by the allure of the flesh and ignited by the flames of lust, once he heard that he was called by the name of God, "Adonai," sought two wives, and the sons of God lusted after the daughters of men. Consequently, inflamed by the flames of their desires, nearly all deviated from the right path, with only a few exceptions. Driven by fear of God, they left the earth entirely and abandoned their nefarious pursuits. Eventually, due to the wiles of demons, they spawned the Giants, whose enormous and unseemly nature, unfitting for human form, would be removed during the general resurrection of the flesh. This removal would apply only to those who were freed from the bonds of the underworld through divine grace.

Certainly, these Giants, driven by their pride, claimed the title "sons of God" for themselves, while disdainfully labeling others as the "sons of men". In the end, their arrogance led to divine retribution not only upon themselves but also upon the entire world. This retribution manifested as a great flood that submerged everything, sparing only Noah, whose name signifies "rest in the Lord." Noah was deemed more just than the others and chosen to safeguard a remnant of humanity.

According to Kabbalistic beliefs, an angel who was once known as Pelion foretold this deluge to Noah. This angel possessed profound knowledge of ancient Patriarchs, including insights into the unfolding events of the world and the salvation of humanity. By divine instruction, he was tasked with conveying this information. Guided by the divine spirit, the angel spent a century preaching to the people, urging them to repent. Regrettably, all his efforts proved futile as they bore no fruit.

During this period, Noah received divine instructions to construct an ark. He, along with his wife, three sons, and their wives, embarked on this vessel. Additionally, representatives of every species from the heavens and the earth joined them, all seeking preservation. Tragically, all others met their demise as they were submerged in the waters of the Cataclysm.

Soon after, but before a new human civilization could take root, individuals

influenced by the Devil's ancient malevolence prompted Noah's son, Ham, to dishonor his sleeping father. Ham exposed and mocked his father's nudity to his brothers, revealing how he had previously ensnared him to hinder his ability to procreate. Berossus, the ancient Chaldean historian, attested to this account.

Upon awakening and realizing the gravity of his son's despicable actions, Noah cursed his grandson, Cain. Cursing those whom God had blessed would not have been just. It became a serious suspicion from that point onward that Cain was originally distinguished from others by his dark complexion, as divine retribution manifested externally. Some even speculate that Ethiopians, Egyptians, and other Black peoples descended from him. However, uncertainty remains regarding whether they underwent various transformations and dispersed into different nations across the world.

These transformations were believed to convey important lessons to the ancient Fathers, who understood them through various signs and sacrifices. The aim was to make their faith in the future seed more evident. Consequently, these transformed individuals traversed diverse regions and places, introducing various vices and attempting to erase any trace of the blessed seed from human memory. With divine permission, the righteous continued to grow in knowledge and reverence for God, while the wicked, who despised the divine name, sank deeper into the abyss of ignorance.

During this era, some astronomers believe that Zoroaster, also known as Nemrod, fell under the sway of demons' cunning. They assert that he received assistance, either from human knowledge or, more likely, from the power of demons. Through various deceptions, these malevolent forces obscured his vision, elevating him above ordinary human abilities and fostering excessive pride within him.

These very demons, driven by his arrogance, convinced the worst of the Giants that they could achieve earthly happiness. Zoroaster eagerly proclaimed this belief to others, leading people to become exceedingly proud and embark on the construction of the Tower of Babel. However, divine intervention swiftly disrupted their nefarious endeavor. Diverse languages

and insurmountable confusion were introduced, compelling them to abandon the project.

As a result, the language that Adam had previously bestowed upon all things, naming each in accordance with its essence and virtue, was taken away from them. Notably, the Irish, to whom the Hebrews trace their origin, did not consent to this project. Simultaneously, while enforcing the observance of fire everywhere, even Noah's wife, emerging from the ark, expressed gratitude to God for not preserving the entire human race. Nimrod also paid homage to God during this period.

For this reason, the early Chaldean kings and Assyrian rulers placed Nimrod at the forefront of their worship, allowing them to be regarded as the first martyrs or confessors of God. This association stemmed from the fact that Abraham, the initial martyr or confessor of God, lived in Hur, a Chaldean territory. There, he genuinely worshipped the God of heaven and steadfastly refused to partake in idolatrous rites, which he vehemently avoided. Consequently, under the command of a tyrant, he was cast into a burning furnace but emerged unharmed, a testament to his unwavering faith, with the flames causing him no harm, as attested by Francesco Giorgio Veneto.

During the same period, under the influence of these very demons, Ninus, the Assyrian king, the first in the world, and the innovator of prominent altars (some even speculate that Christ was prefigured in a prior world), facilitated the practice of idol worship. He erected a statue in honor of his father, Bel, which served as a sanctuary for individuals seeking refuge after committing crimes. This practice subsequently gained widespread acceptance among the populace. Man, driven to madness by these statues, which seemed to have been crafted by another Prometheus out of clay, was led astray by demons to the point of neglecting and forgetting his Creator. This resulted in the gravest of all offenses: the abhorrent act of forsaking the divine in favor of sordid creatures, often of far lower worth, to whom divine honors were accorded. Among all crimes, this was the most heinous, given the nature of the transgression, as it was not directed against human authority but divine sovereignty.

What becomes evident from all this is that even nature itself may have been impacted by such abominable actions. Aram, the forebear of humanity, was removed from human affairs by death, and this was not without purpose. In the midst of a large assembly of wrongdoers, even the innocent were sometimes seized and punished. Yet God cannot be charged with injustice in this regard, for He justly punishes the wicked and rightly rewards the righteous, elevating them in honor. From the outset of this idolatrous veneration of creatures, the situation evolved progressively with the assistance of the demons' ingenious methods and deceptions. Initially ensnared were the Chaldeans, who succumbed to this diabolical superstition, followed closely by the priests of Egypt, who, more than others, fell under its enchantment.

As time passed, driven by their madness, they sank deeply into the belief that salvation, along with all their blessings and benefits, could be achieved through fires and statues crafted through magical arts, as if these were granted to them by God. They held the mistaken notion that souls were placed into bodies by nature, rather than by God. Consequently, as time advanced and a most dreadful plague of souls infected the majority of humanity, God Himself dispatched Abraham with a mission to purge the world of this belief, even though they were his kin. His purpose was to guide them onto a righteous path and, if I may put it this way, to initiate the practice of circumcision, a sign bestowed upon him by the ministry of angels, an act some Cabalists attribute to the angel Zadkiel.

This was undertaken to shield Abraham from the corrupting influence of their association, in line with the adage, "With the corrupt, we become corrupted". To ensure that divine promises, destined to be fulfilled in due course, would not be entirely erased from the hearts and minds of all the faithful due to diabolical deceptions, a perpetual covenant with God was established through Abraham and his descendants. This covenant included the external mark of circumcision, to be performed on male infants on the eighth day of their birth, as though it were an offering to God. The demons, recognizing that this sign significantly weakened the flames of forbidden desires, were unwilling to let this go unchallenged. Hence, they incited other nations to ridicule the Hebrews, who were set apart from the rest, reproaching them with this

practice as if it were a source of shame and dishonor. They derogatorily referred to them as "circumcised" and insultingly called them "cut" or "mutilated" individuals. Eventually, this derogatory idea was widely disseminated, labeling the Hebrews as impious adherents of superstitions.

As a consequence, these nations incurred God's just wrath, forfeiting all grace derived from the true God. They descended into a state of utter reprobation, devoid even of the light of nature, becoming more akin to beasts than humans. Many among them indulged in disgraceful and unnatural acts, such as engaging in relations with animals, same-sex unions, and other abhorrent practices.

As a consequence of this beastly and utterly abominable behavior, which was nothing short of loathsome in the eyes of God, all involved eventually faced their well-deserved punishments. At noon, three angels appeared, but only two of them promptly entered Sodom. Shortly thereafter, sulfur and fire rained down from the sky, reducing the city to ashes as a result of the heinous crimes committed within its walls. These five ancient and renowned cities, tainted by such wicked sin, were utterly obliterated and continue to stand as an everlasting testament to divine wrath. The area where they once stood has transformed into an extraordinary lake, unlike any other, where living creatures do not submerge, contrary to the laws of nature. It is so deadly that any birds flying above it meet their demise. Some Cabalists speculate that these may be the gates to the infernal realms, a concept that aligns with our own beliefs concerning the subterranean world.

Even Lot's wife, who remains anonymous in the scripture, is said to have been transformed as a punishment for disobeying the command not to look back. She was turned into a salt statue, which stands prominently to this day, serving as a solemn reminder. These and similar divine stories were foolishly and erroneously imitated by demons, who sought to mimic human flaws like senseless monkeys. For instance, they inspired ancient tales of countless metamorphoses, concocted by poets to further bewilder already misguided pagans. These poets spun tales of statues transforming into rocks, such as Bactrus on the mountain of Rhodes; Phyllis into an almond tree; Narcissus into a flower; Arethusa into a fountain; and the woodpecker, Picus, and even

the star Arctophylax. These fictitious transformations can be found throughout the lore of various nations.

Hence, it is believed that the memory of the deluge, which Noah imparted to the Etruscans as they sought to reach both the highest and lowest realms, was distorted through the cunning of demons. These malevolent entities falsely attributed it to Pan, after his ascent to Mount Eryx, mirroring the true sacrifice that would occur many centuries later. Moreover, when they comprehended that God, as a foreshadowing of the true sacrifice to come in the distant future, tested Abraham by commanding him to offer his only beloved son on Mount Moriah (for the patriarchs regarded mountains as sacred places), they swiftly convinced other nations to instead offer human sacrifices to them. This resulted in a dwindling supply of human sacrifices designated for their worship.

The practice of offering human sacrifices was initially instilled among the Tyrians by Thanices and was later embraced by numerous neighboring nations. Eventually, parents themselves believed they should not spare their own children. This madness is evidenced in the Holy Scriptures, which recount how the king of Moab, in the presence of besieging enemies, sacrificed his firstborn son and heir as an offering to the idol Molech to secure victory over the Hebrews. Although abhorrent, this act did not result in severe punishment. Instead, the Hebrews, by divine command, faced retribution for their manifold sins.

These incredibly abominable acts of sacrificing their own children, where else could they have originated but from the Devil himself, the murderer and deceiver from the very beginning? This malevolent spirit, the proudest among them, did not hesitate to demand the murder of the most excellent creation, formed in the image of the true God. He persuaded those who settled in Carthage as Tyrian colonists to offer sacrifices to Saturn, and later, in Tauric Chersonesus, Arabia, and Egypt, he continued to deceive them. It wasn't until Amasis, the wise king of Egypt, abolished this deception, replacing it with wax figurines.

This malevolent deceiver eventually infiltrated Germany, where the Teutates,

their idol, had long been offered such abhorrent sacrifices. It then spread to Sweden, near Upsala. Italy, once the mistress of the world, also fell under its influence, but it was liberated when Hercules, on his mission to cleanse the world of monsters, provided a more accurate interpretation. He revealed that this sacrifice should be conducted through light, as the very word suggests. Rome, too, amended its practices, no longer deeming human bloodshed necessary to appease the gods. Consequently, in Gaul, Britain, and Norway among the Druids, this custom began to wane.

Who cannot discern that all these practices were born from demons? However, during the time of the incarnation of Christ in the flesh, foretold by the prophets, these diabolical practices ceased to exist within the Roman Empire due to the intervention of Emperor Hadrian, guided by divine influence.

Furthermore, this pestilence became even more widespread in the New World during the era of Spanish exploration, with Christopher Columbus of Liguria being the first to encounter it. It often occurred, not infrequently, that thousands of people were annually sacrificed, often accompanied by various gems, for they were considered idols by their people. This was not limited to the Yucatecan, though the reasons behind it are less well-known, but also extended to the Mexicans, who were in control of the region at the time.

This abhorrent practice was eradicated from their land in our era by the great Ferdinand Cortés, the leader of the Spaniards, under the patronage of Charles V, who is highly acclaimed. It was uprooted as if by another Hercules. Moreover, these malevolent spirits employed their cunning to deceive, leading to the innocent Joseph being sold to the Egyptians by his own brothers. Even Pharaoh was swayed to doubt Moses, the servant of God, who was the first among the prophets and is said to have prophesied through a two-horned beast, according to the Cabalists. Furthermore, these spirits endeavored to undermine the authority of divine miracles through various means and similar trickery, captivating the minds of humans. They accomplished this not only through their deceptions but also by ensnaring the hearts of nations, to the extent that they prompted not only the heavens and stars but also nearly all creatures, fish, garlic, onions, vegetables, gems, and

even the elements provided by God for the benefit of humanity to be worshipped as deities.

In His mercy, recognizing that humanity had strayed from the true path in many ways, God inscribed the supreme law, consisting of two stone tablets, on Mount Sinai through Moses, amid flashes of lightning and thunder. Among other commandments, He ordained the observance of the Sabbath. However, these deceitful spirits, under various myths, falsely advocated for the celebration of opposing festivals. They disseminated these falsehoods to bolster their own superstition. They imitated the Israelites, who celebrated genuine festivals in honor of the true God, by instituting special celebrations and sacrifices for their own idols and heroes among all nations. They did so universally, mimicking Jupiter, Apollo, Dionysius, and countless others with their own images and heroes. They vied with the Israelites in commemorating the Paschal lamb and offered various libations to their gods.

They further enhanced divination with remarkable cunning, and some even went so far as to impose their own laws upon their nations, supplanting those of Moses. In Egypt, figures like Hermes and Apis held sway, while the Persians had their lawgivers in the form of Oromasys and Bactris. The Cretans were guided by Minos and Epimenides, the Thracians by Zamolxis, and the Scythians by Anacharsis. These lawgivers played pivotal roles in their respective societies.

Among the Lacedaemonians, Lycurgus and Triptolemus were esteemed lawgivers, while the Athenians were influenced by the likes of Phoroneus, Draco, and Solon. For many centuries thereafter, the Macedonians were governed by the Cabiri, and the Romans looked to Romulus and Numa Pompilius for their legal framework. The Indians, too, had their lawgivers, including Sesostris and Somogorbonus, whose influence persists in the idolatrous practices observed in the East to this day. Similarly, the Viracoces had a profound impact on the Peruvians, and Zuazatlus influenced the Mexicans. In the Lapland region, Amidas and Xaca served as significant lawgivers. Finally, Maugmectus, as some accounts suggest, emerged from these diverse influences, leading to speculation about his identity as Antichrist, the harbinger of chaos and blasphemy.

This false prophet falsely claimed to have received divine laws from an archangel. He exploited and deceived the suffering and downtrodden, much like others of his ilk throughout history. To bolster their authority, these individuals emulated Moses by asserting that they had received laws from their respective deities. Zoroaster claimed his law came from a benevolent deity, Minos from Jupiter, Lycurgus from Apollo, Zamolxis from Vesta, and Numa from the nymph Egeria. They resorted to cunning and deceit, even composing most of their laws in languages other than their native tongues, obscuring the veneration of their gods and attempting to mimic the true faith in the living God, observed with profound reverence.

They wrote their laws in Greek, using Punic script among the ancient Greeks, or the Etruscan language among the Romans, which bore similarities to Aramaic and was more suited for interpreting symbols. Similarly, the ancient Germans and Gauls expressed their beliefs using Greek characters, while the peoples of the East used Syriac script to record their superstitions.

Even today, influenced by malevolent forces, several indigenous peoples, including Greeks, Ethiopians, and certain Indian communities, who identify as Christians, still hold on to remnants of their superstitions alongside their everyday language. This practice is apparent among the Chinese, who continue to engage in idolatry, as well as the Laplanders and Peruvians. The latter encompasses the inhabitants of the recently discovered Bathic region, who speak different languages among themselves but retain them discreetly. The influence of these spiritual forces is also conspicuous among the Turks, Assyrians, Moors, Arabs, Nubians, Egyptians, Persians, Medes, Parthians, Arachosians, Sogdians, and some Indian groups, along with the Tmaum, Tartars, Saca, and various populations across the globe. They all have their laws written in a language other than their native tongue, frequently employing Arabic.

Furthermore, haven't they, upon noticing that the Hebrews abstained from certain meats according to their ancient law, followed suit, as if restraining themselves from consuming Egyptian cattle? This practice is still observed among the Indians and even among the Syrians who subsist on a diet

primarily of fish.

Hence, through adherence to divine law, this blessed faith has taken root not only among the Jews, growing day by day, but also among the nations touched by Sibylline prophecies. Ten of these oracles are renowned, and some contend that there was only one, known by various names. Regardless, all of them were vessels of divine inspiration and delivered prophecies. Although the Sibyls themselves were unaware of the import of their utterances, lacking the true faith, these prophecies flowed into their minds like images in a mirror, illuminating them. These oracles were not for their own benefit but rather for the enlightenment of the nations, and thus could not bring harm. They were sent to these peoples, much like Balaam was a vessel for oracles and Caiaphas served as a priest, even though they remained oblivious to the prophetic nature of their words.

Moreover, through these means, in an attempt to mimic the Hebrews who preserved the Songs of Solomon, the prophecies of Ezekiel, and the allegorical interpretation of Scripture for the select few, they promoted the reading of the writings attributed to these women and the Hydaspes. In addition, they summoned malevolent and deceitful spirits in the very year when the birth of the blessed seed was prophesied among the Hebrews. These spirits, driven by their own wickedness, became aware of the impending birth and the foretold crucifixion of this holy figure. Their intention was to obstruct or, at the very least, delay the proclamation of the divine Son of God by any means at their disposal.

As a result, they influenced numerous poets to create extensive and impressive works, depicting the offspring of Zeus, who, to some extent, appeared to imitate the virtues and divine deeds of this most sacred seed, presenting them as mere human replicas. What were the ancient seers hoping to achieve with the story of Perseus, born of a virgin, other than to undermine the apostles' teaching about the miraculous birth of this divine seed from a virgin, portraying it as something unremarkable and unworthy of admiration?

Similarly, what was their purpose in crafting tales of Mercury, the mediator between gods and mortals, if not to diminish the significance of this seed's

future role as the intermediary between gods and humans? Why did they recount the exploits of Hercules, born of Jupiter, who vanquished numerous monsters, if not to celebrate their own deliverance from great perils, instituting sacrifices and dedicating tithes to him?

And what did they intend by Semiticus, the king who descended into the underworld and returned with spoils, if not to suggest that when this sacred seed would truly unite human nature with his divine nature in an unbreakable bond, he would free humanity from the dominion of the underworld, rescuing them from that abyss where there was no salvation?

In making these claims, they constructed these narratives, interconnecting various elements as though they were analogous.

What other purpose could they have had with the tale of Asclepius, who cured a variety of human ailments, if not to insinuate that when this seed of holiness arrived, his miraculous healings would be rendered inconsequential? Their portrayals of Aristaeus of Proconesus, vanishing and reappearing suddenly, Cleomedes sealed within a chest and vanishing without a trace, and Adonis, who sprinkled his blood upon Hyperborean and Abary plants, or of him soaring through the air. Did they not intend to ridicule these accounts as if they were absurd? Much like when we commemorate the memory of this seed, resting in a tomb year after year, and they deride it, as if he had risen from the dead by his own power, ascended to heaven in the presence of many of his brethren, and we honor it with gratitude and joy. They treat it with indifference, as if it were an event deserving of no significant admiration.

What about the Mithras sacrifice, performed with bread and water, and the water of Mercury, with which they hoped to atone for their transgressions? Lastly, what about the numerous stories of this kind concocted by them? Did you think they did this for any other purpose than to obfuscate and shroud the brilliance of this most magnificent light sent from heaven to enlighten the nations, obscuring it with the darkness and shadows of their own myths, and perceiving in it the power to extinguish it entirely?

In a similar fashion and with a comparable strategy, they endeavored to

imitate divine prophets who beckoned the people toward the knowledge of the true God through frequent preaching and revelations. They, too, adhered to their own false prophecies, and among them, the most renowned were Musaeus of Athens, Lycus, Bacchides, Boetius, and Tiresias himself, Eucleus, Epimenides, and Mopsus. Although they engaged in predicting different future events, they were occupied long ago with the practice of abducting their own sacrifices or even subjecting themselves to fasting, purifications, various chants, and dances. These unclean spirits, desiring divine honors, manipulated and dominated vulnerable humans for an extended period.

For instance, the virgin prophetess of the Branchidae could not deliver responses or touch the water with her feet unless she held a man's hand and fasted for three days. Similarly, the oracle of Colophon would not provide answers unless the water, kept concealed from everyone else, was tasted first. Furthermore, the Delphic oracle itself did not issue responses unless the priest, seated on a tripod in the innermost chamber of the cave, inhaled noxious fumes rather than divine inspiration.

Consider also the responses from many other oracles, which, guided and inspired by the same malevolent spirits, were initially derived from the oak tree at the temple of Zeus in Dodona. Later, when the voice of the true God echoed from the ark, commanding the priests to chant the future punishments of the people, they received these responses.

So, when they responded with these counterfeit oracles and engaged in all sorts of mockery regarding the gods, a practice that persisted up until the time of Pyrrhus, the king of the Epirotes, was their intention anything other than to mimic the verses of Job and the Psalms of David? They sought to introduce an appearance of remarkable depth in their ambiguity, striving to pass as authentic. In truth, their actions were consistently deceptive and duplicitous, with their ultimate aim being the harm of humanity. Therefore, they aimed for their fraudulent oracles, constructed within strict poetic meters, to possess an appealing and resonant quality, akin to the praises sung to the true God in hymns, exuding a certain sweetness. However, as time progressed, and they could no longer hide behind their falsehoods but were compelled to reveal

their true nature, it became evident that their predictions did not stem from divine influence.

It became clear that the Pythian priestesses and their entrails were not imbued with some mystical insight, as some had previously believed. Oracles, devoid of true knowledge, were not subject to the nature of things or any particular location. Instead, the real cause was to be attributed to a far more profound source - a higher intellect. According to those who maintain that the administration of the world is entrusted to these higher intelligences, they assert that various influences from the celestial realms touch the earthly plane, and wise individuals, anticipating events well in advance, perceive through their inner essence's reflection what is to come. The questionable behavior of the priests, driven by avarice and often in an altered state, accepting bribes, cannot be considered more significant. They found themselves overwhelmed by enthusiasm, rendering them unsure of how to respond to those seeking answers.

It is even less appropriate to attribute this to the demons themselves' failing or illness, as they are virtually ageless, not subject to the aging that afflicts humans. Therefore, it is more accurate, to borrow the words of a comic poet, to say that the crux of the matter lies in this fact: the time had arrived when the Sun of Justice Himself, the radiant glory of paternal splendor, was ascending from the heavens. Upon the appearance of His divine light, all the devil's oracles were vanquished and silenced utterly, much like the spectral disturbances that cease to plague humanity when the sun rises in the morning.

For this reason, both the Greeks, who considered wise those who provided instruction, and the Romans, who held dominion over the world and upheld the law, consulted these same demons. Additionally, these demons, having observed that the Hebrews in the wilderness, as a just punishment from God, were afflicted by venomous serpents but found salvation merely by gazing upon the bronze serpent erected by Moses at God's command, did not hesitate to mimic this practice in their own way. Consequently, Nicagoras brought an image of the same demon to the people of Sicyon, and the Romans similarly displayed Aesculapius to combat a plague.

Furthermore, when Solomon constructed the truly magnificent and beautiful temple dedicated to the highest and true God, Sabaoth, it was positioned at the heart of the world. Craftsmen were gathered from all corners, inspired by the very Spirit of God, to create a place of worship for all Hebrews. However, did not envious spirits attempt to inspire the construction of their own temples in that sacred space? Evidently so. The Temple of Delphi arose for Apollo, Egypt built one for Serapis in Alexandria, Asia constructed temples in Ephesus for Diana, and in Scandia, a temple for Thor was built in Upsala —all at great expense.

When the long-awaited promise to the world was finally fulfilled in the form of the holiest offspring, these impure spirits left no stone unturned in their efforts to counter this mortal incarnation. They incited Herod to arm himself with nefarious intent, sparing not even his own blood. Augustus, though innocent, was made to endure being called a pig rather than a son by Herod. And when this innocent lamb, willing to redeem us with His blood, surrendered Himself to sinners, these spirits tried every form of torment, using the instrument they had implanted within the Jews of that era.

Moreover, they relentlessly pursued the holy martyrs of Christ. These martyrs, so numerous that even if five thousand or more were added daily, they would not suffice for an entire year. The bones of these martyrs were so abundant that they could be seen burning throughout the city, akin to wood. However, many were kept from witnessing this sight out of fear of the Senate and the Emperors who were influenced by these demons. Yet, their efforts were in vain.

Emperor Augustus, despite being unaware of His birth, passionately sought its eradication and the complete obliteration of His memory, still attested to His life. Lentulus wrote about His death, Tacitus about His arrival in Judea, Suetonius about His miracles and resurrection, and Josephus bore witness. Additionally, Pliny documented unprecedented earthquakes. Had it not been for the influence of these demons, would they not have sought to ban the study of these teachings, forcing followers of this sacred doctrine to forsake their exploration of divine matters due to ignorance?

However, those who attempted to suppress the study of these teachings did not succeed. Instead, numerous individuals emerged from all corners, well-versed in various languages, singing praises to this sacred lineage, confirming its truth with their own lives. These same demons also attempted to manipulate artists into depicting this holy lineage as a serpent in a bid to distance people from its worship.

And what about the various sophists, such as Celsus, Porphyry, Julian, and others, who employed deceitful falsehoods in the teachings of many heretics? Their efforts were in vain, for those they sought to eradicate only grew stronger day by day. Consequently, a great multitude of martyrs willingly testified to the truth of this holiest lineage, even in the face of death. Not only did many scholars persist in the face of bans on their teachings, but we should also, if the opportunity arises, consider living our lives in the protective, life-giving shade of this holiest lineage, following their example.

Now, let's return to the topics we were discussing earlier. Such is the extent to which these malevolent spirits have been driven away and vanquished by the divine advent and the preaching of His Word through the Apostles that they are now utterly silenced. The mere mention of their name is hushed even by wicked entities. Their idols have been overturned, as exemplified by a significant event involving Divine Bartholomew confronting the demon Astharoth in Albania and Saint Thomas's encounter with Meideyo.

Moreover, what judgment can be passed on the Hebrew people who, in their miserable state, anticipate the coming of another Messiah? Their eyes and minds are so clouded and disturbed, it appears to be the work of demons. Due to these demonic influences, they have neglected the truth and embraced falsehood. They become entangled in the minutiae of scripture and letters, distorting the meaning to the extent that they lose touch with the truth, abandoning their understanding and leaving their bodies behind. These insects, cursed thrice and four times, are utterly displaced from their homeland. In their zeal to reclaim it, they beseech God daily, even though they have been without it for so long, never as long as they have been now.

Their numerous idolatries, the slaying of prophets, and various other

transgressions have left them without a king, a priesthood, the ephod, and prophets, all of which they once boasted of. They are exiled in extreme hatred throughout the nations and in various places, wandering in wretchedness. Despite their piety, they suffer this blindness, rendering them more obtuse than moles. They willingly bring this blindness upon themselves in broad daylight, just as vipers are blinded by the sun's light. This is especially true when their rabbis do not remain silent about the miracles of this lineage, attributing the ruin and destruction of Israel to the unjust death of this holy offspring, as Rabbi Moses of Egypt, a highly respected figure among them, has done.

Currently, the Name is not allowed to be spoken in Hebrew. But as this name has been transmitted to many and is still invoked by them, it would be more equitable to present it, as it is also found inscribed in Hebrew characters on an ancient coin and is also uttered by the Arabs and Chaldeans, with slight variations in pronunciation from their languages, which is discernible to those versed in the Cabalistic art. I willfully bypass the enigma of this name, truly ineffable, and will not delve into what some Cabalists have written about it.

Under this new and indescribable name, the unity of divinity and humanity, upon which our salvation hinges, is openly revealed to us from heaven. This revelation is not only striking due to its uniqueness but also because of its distinct articulation, akin to Jupiter among the Latins and Zeus among the Greeks. To anyone who delves into this secret, it is so astonishing and extraordinary that no other name could have been found by which we could be delivered from the dominion of Satan, to whom we were enslaved due to the sin of our first parents, than this ultimate source of all holiness, the sanctuary for our distress. Furthermore, this revelation is as clear as daylight in the script of this word.

Among the Hebrews, it is inscribed with four letters, and among all nations, the name of God is pronounced with the same number of elements. This can be observed in the great name, the Tetragrammaton, written as יהו ה.

Notably, Alexander the Great, upon seeing this name inscribed in golden letters on the high priest's tiara, immediately dismounted from his horse,

genuflected, struck his chest with his hand, and paid it homage. The name of God is also pronounced with the same number of elements: Allah among the Arabs, Teut among the Egyptians, among the Magi; Orfi among the Greeks, θεός, Persians, Sire among the Latins, Deus; among the ancient Etruscans, Esar, also Gott among the Germans, Bouh among the Sarmatians, and Istu among the Paeonians and Tartars, Itga.

Porphyry, who indulged in the worship of gods more than most, could have easily grasped the wondrous secret of this, had he not turned away from the divine light himself. Through the radiance of this light, demons were so utterly vanquished that idols ceased to grant any favors. Once he began to adore this most blessed name, he lamented his prior actions greatly. This story, and a similar fate of certain figures concocted as deities by deluded paganism, is recounted by Plutarch. Yet, it is distinct from our experiences, as it hinges on comprehension or implication, and it cannot be tainted in any manner, just as ours cannot when originating from external sources and necessitating a certain instrument for understanding.

Furthermore, not solely because of this, as if the demons, bereft of divine grace (which is genuine death), were in that state from the outset. In fact, long before, they had fallen due to their prior transgression. Their increase in power over humanity was primarily due to the loss of their tyrannical rule, which had been permitted by divine authority for an extended period. Eventually, they imposed death upon the offspring of God, which they had no rightful claim to, as it was naturally impeccable. They brought death as recompense for what we had forfeited through Adam, not unjustly, but with interest. "Where sin abounded, grace abounded much more."

Returning to our subject, we observe that these demons devised numerous other methods to elevate themselves to divine status, daring to imitate various aspects of the divine realm as closely as possible. For instance, they were known to make certain trees produce human-like voices, such as in the Dodonaean forest, where it's said that the Lord responded from the Ark. Similarly, among the Persians, oracles were delivered by trees, and people believed they could prolong their lives by consuming the fruits consecrated to the Sun, akin to the magician Artefius. Something nearly parallel to this

occurred near the Nymphs' lake. While it did not involve spoken words, certain signs were used to provide responses. The demons attempted to imitate God even in this respect, often arriving at the truth through signs, similar to Moses' experiences, like the burning bush that was not consumed or the wet fleece placed on dry ground. These signs were indicative of the Hebrew God's judgment.

For those who sought to glimpse the outcome of their endeavors as if with their very eyes, they practiced a form of divination by tossing wood into the fire. If their undertakings were fated to succeed, the wood, when thrown into the fire, would be instantly consumed by flames without delay. But if not, the fire appeared to withdraw, as though avoiding the wood, much like what occurred in Gnetia. There, during offered sacrifices, if the gods were pleased, heavenly flames would descend and promptly consume the offering. This aligns with the beliefs of Hebrew Talmudists and parallels the actions of the priests of Baal who, while contending with Elijah regarding the true religion, saw their customary signs fail them before eventually conceding.

Moreover, in the Thyaneian spring and the Scamander River, they initiated their own practices, imitating the concept of the "water of cursing," employed for adulterers. In these practices, virgins were examined through an oath and subsequent bathing. If they had preserved their chastity in honor of Diana, they were declared pure and eligible for marriage. Additionally, during times when public sins were prevalent, they occasionally ceased from providing oracles temporarily, mimicking the actions of the true God who also withheld His divine voice from the Ark when the sons of Eli were transgressing.

Furthermore, kingdoms and cities on the verge of destruction falsely claimed that they were being preserved through their own actions, attempting to imitate the role of the holy angels who perpetually watch over the righteous. Many other such inventions were crafted by them. Although we've mentioned only these examples, it should suffice for our purposes.

BOOK III

The responses from demons exhibited a consistent pattern - they were invariably either ambiguous or exceedingly obscure. This deliberate obscurity aimed to ensnare humans in bewildering puzzles, as exemplified in the following instance: "You will go, you will speak, you will not die in battle, and Apulus Carolus will not conquer." This tendency cannot be attributed to the nature of oracles, as some ancients wrongly believed, implying that they had no other means of expression. Instead, it should be attributed to the demons' deceptive and often ignorant nature.

While demons possessed vast knowledge in various domains and remarkable intellectual acumen, thanks to their innate understanding of concepts, which emerged from their essence, they were not considered theologians due to these abilities. Despite their intellectual prowess, they were unable to arrive at definite and certain truths concerning unpredictable events. This inability was not because they were constrained by angels, as Scotus claimed, as it would be absurd if the realm of the senses were within reach of the human senses while the intellectual realm remained beyond the grasp of the human intellect.

What truly hindered them, as Thomas asserted, was not the matter at hand. It is also irrelevant that their predictions were sometimes uncannily accurate, as demonstrated by the Marsian prophet, who foresaw the Cannae battle many years prior, rendering it more as a recounting of the past than a prophecy of the future. Similarly, Hydaspes, an ancient Lydian king, predicted the fall of the Roman Empire and the world's universal ruin as part of a future judgment. When these predictions were made, it was not as if they were originating from their own understanding or were confirmed by revelations from angels, as we shall establish later.

Their prophecies were articulated in this manner, in a simple and straightforward way, akin to how angels perceived them through their

intuitive faculties, even though, theoretically, they could possess the capacity for reasoned discourse, provided it did not fundamentally contradict their nature. Scotus did not dispute this possibility, but it did not align with their inherent order. These demons had not lost their natural knowledge due to some past transgression, as mentioned previously, but rather obscured it. Their use of this knowledge did not serve the divine purpose of glorifying God, as was the case with the angels; instead, it was often put to base and ignoble uses.

Hence, this knowledge of theirs, more appropriately characterized as nocturnal rather than diurnal, and intrinsic to angels, stemming from the core of their own nature, merits distinction. In this form of knowledge, they apprehend the virtues of all things in a manner allowing them, in a single act, to comprehend the essence of any individual, along with all its distinct traits. However, they cannot, through their own volition, shift their intelligence to grasp the various species of things. If a human were to somehow possess even a fraction of this comprehensive knowledge, it would undoubtedly yield greater satisfaction and joy than perceiving the entire world. Demons, however, due to their transgressions against God, find themselves deprived of this knowledge, albeit not completely devoid of it.

Nonetheless, they fail to gain insight into matters contingent upon the will of God, our will, or those existing solely in the future. Therefore, if they ever foretell future events, it must be assumed that they first receive such insights through the will and revelation of higher powers, orchestrated by the wondrous order and providence of God. This serves as a means to lead humans, who, among all creatures, most vividly reflect the divine image, to plunge headlong into punishment and self-destruction. They willingly defile themselves with transgressions, even though they, more than all others, have turned away from the supreme and infinite good.

It should not astonish anyone that angels occasionally engage in discourse with demons, as their minds are not entirely dissimilar, and their natures are not so fundamentally opposed that all love has been utterly abandoned. Even if they have renounced the love of God, an inclination angels certainly do not share, they do so to test and bolster their faith. Nevertheless, they wage

mutual warfare due to their disparate wills. On one side, they strive to magnify the honor of God in every possible way, while on the other, they labor to diminish it and act in opposition to it.

However, demons, in their profound obstinacy and malice, are not drawn towards any form of love for God through these interactions with angels. Their nature fundamentally differs from that of angels. Their primary motivation for engaging in such conversations is to gain knowledge of future events. This can be seen in the example of Satan's dialogue with God Himself, as described in the Book of Job, a deceptive act that has led many nations astray through false prophecies, deceiving some even to this day.

By foretelling the future, the devil once exploited the natural human curiosity for such knowledge that exists nearly worldwide. Remarkably, similar practices were discovered among the ancient Druids in Gaul and the Gymnosophists in India. The devil cunningly managed to tarnish and blaspheme things originally created for the benefit and use of humanity due to their misuse. This was the result of the deceptive and fraudulent tactics of demons, who introduced superstitious and magical arts, derived from elements and other creatures, into human minds. As a consequence, the rightful reverence for God and piety was eroded, and an endless array of pagan deities was conceived. It reached a point where almost every aspect of nature or art was subjected to divine honors.

For instance, the Chaldeans, who once worshipped the God of Aretia, later bowed before fire. Even individuals like Achan, driven by demonic madness, did not hesitate to introduce their own children to this false worship. Even today, some witches frequently consecrate the infants of others or even their own to this deity. Furthermore, in the farthest regions of Scythia and more remote areas, many conducted brutal rituals and ceremonies, often involving human sacrifices and other horrific acts, as part of their superstitious beliefs.

In the regions of Ethiopia, people would bow down and incline themselves towards an imperceptible element, specifically water from a pumice stone, seeking assistance from it. Similarly, the ancient Persians, upon witnessing the Hebrews uncover their heads during the new moon, would offer praise to

God for the renewal of all things and engage in worship. They also paid divine honors to the Sun, referred to as "Mithra," and at times made predictions about future events based on its rising or the behavior of horses.

Various idols, like those worshiped by the Egyptians, Greeks, and other nations, were believed to provide responses. Even to this day, similar idols have not been entirely eradicated from the world. This is in contrast to the belief of Bernardinus Mandelius, who, relying on the texts of the prophets Zechariah and Isaiah, though not fully comprehending them, predicted the abolition of all idols with the advent of the Messiah. Despite his otherwise sharp intellect, deep knowledge of philosophy, and mastery of logical subtleties, he may have misunderstood this prophecy. He was referring to the Roman Empire when it held sway over most of the known world, and people often referred to the entire world as the "Roman Empire." This linguistic convention was also followed in the New Testament when the Spirit of God, inspiring the Evangelist, mentions Caesar's decree to register the entire world, even though the term "Roman Empire" specifically denoted only the Roman dominion.

Hence, the idols remaining in the world will gradually be phased out until, eventually, everyone, with a clearer perception of the uncreated light, will form one unified flock under one shepherd. In Europe, among the Greenlanders; in Asia, among the Obolorians and many others; in Africa, among some Nubians; and in the New World among various peoples, idols still provide responses through certain statues. Nevertheless, returning to the subject at hand and bypassing other aspects of idolatry that could be discussed, there have been numerous and diverse forms of idol worship among Ethiopians, Arabs, Moors, Spaniards, Gauls, Germans, Sarmatians, Scythians, Romans, Carthaginians, and other civilizations, exceeding three hundred according to Themistius. Among these, the Etruscans venerated thunder, lightning, thunderbolts, falling stars, and other celestial fires, including comets. They often attributed future events, in their lack of understanding, to these natural phenomena, as they were not always deceptive, being produced by nature itself. They diligently sought to predict the number of days and designated various gods as overseers of these occurrences. They even documented the art of predicting lightning, drawing

instruction from these natural events. The Etruscans, Thages, and the nymph Begoe were some of those who wrote about this practice.

Through this superstitious and Pythonic art of the demons, Porfena Larthes, with his cunning, came to the aid of the long-besieged city of Vulsinii. He summoned a terrifying lightning bolt and unleashed a destructive fire, putting an end to the siege. Tullus, the Roman king, not yet fully versed in the ways of such knowledge, recklessly encountered a similar peril, offering an opportunity for his own demise, ultimately perishing in a lightning strike.

I will now skip over the subjects of auspices and auguries, which were derived from various bird behaviors, such as their flight patterns, songs, and observations of their eating and drinking habits. These practices were initially revealed by demons to the Palasitans and then disseminated to the Pisidians, Greeks, Etruscans, Romans, and nearly all other nations. This art held such significance among the ancients that they would not embark on any endeavor, whether public or private, without consulting it. Their belief was grounded in the notion that these practices held knowledge of many things intertwined with divine secrets. Even the demons, surpassing human capacities, were found to possess this knowledge when delving into the histories of nations. An example of this is the renown of the augur Navius, celebrated for his ability to discern and understand hidden and buried thoughts in the hearts of others. What seemed impossible by nature became feasible through diligent investigation. For instance, the art of divination involved the splitting of a piece of wood, and these omens were observed not only through the arrival of foreign birds but also by the sudden appearance of unfamiliar animals.

A few years ago, in the Province of Perugia, an extraordinary and unusual abundance of mice, unlike anything before, infested the fields, consuming crops and foreboding ominous and direful events. This event foreshadowed the civil war among the Spaniards, stemming from their inherent avarice, which had attracted the rodents.

Ancient sources reveal that many forms of divination had fallen into disuse, as evidenced in the Etruscan practices. However, this wasn't because of any new celestial configuration, as some have suggested, but rather due to the rise

of divine enlightenment that dispelled the darkness of the demonic arts. Additionally, they sought omens through the sudden appearances of animals, the diverse utterances of humans, and the various circumstances of women giving birth. Some believed that they could predict future events by interpreting the forms and radiance of flames and fires in the air, where these demons seemed to rule as if in their own realm.

Furthermore, they observed prodigies through various phenomena occurring on Earth itself. In recent years, a significant example was the sighting of a giant-sized man in the Popayan region, with a split abdomen and two infants held in his arms. He uttered menacing words and then vanished, leaving the people filled with great fear. They also made predictions based on the frequent flooding of rivers, the behavior of water currents, and the roaring sounds of water, as exemplified by Velleda, the renowned seer among the Germans.

Predictions were also derived from diverse terrestrial occurrences, strange sounds, and similar events. It is crucial to note that all these phenomena were not the result of anything other than the efforts and actions of demons. Even in the present day, among certain primitive tribes, they have not ceased in their endeavors to encourage divine worship and cause harm to humans through their fervent practices.

As they relentlessly seek to acquire divine worship and engage in cultic practices through both covert and overt means, as if they could purchase them with our sins, it appears appropriate to briefly remind the reader in this context, though it may seem somewhat unrelated, of a method that could be employed here.

One approach involves the utilization of certain seemingly vain and futile objects, which, unbeknownst to us, possess a hidden power and efficacy, in order to appease our desires when we intensely seek what we want. Just as we employ specific items to ward off enchantments and spells, we should make an effort to grant the mind foresight, similar to the way we use certain objects to counter various disturbances and noises. For example, we may employ mirrors like the Meleta mirrors, along with particular materials or

combine sacred words with ordinary and seemingly insignificant objects to fulfill our desires. It's as if, in pursuit of our desired object, we recite the prayers of saints, psalms, and passages from the Gospels. However, it's important to note that these items shouldn't be regarded as random or discarded; they are, in fact, the most precious of all, bestowed upon us from heaven.

Yet, in these seemingly futile and insignificant objects, no inherent power can be said to reside, whether from God or nature. Instead, they are more akin to inventions imposed upon them by deceptive demons. Consequently, demons are assigned all sorts of unfamiliar names, which are secretly used by common people as talismans and even appear in dreams. Notably, none of these names find mention or significance in sacred scripture. Names such as Got, Giber, Gabir, Cadebru, and six hundred others are attributed to them. It is even more astonishing that these names are scarcely encountered among those prone to superstitions. According to their belief, these names were coined by the very demons when the divine name was first invoked in times of necessity. This was a deceptive tactic designed to ensnare people's faith, similar to how Enos, the first person to call upon divine assistance in the natural course of events, is described in the law. Enos is considered to have received greater grace than others, as he was the third generation from Adam, and even Moses, divinely revealed to the Hebrews and renowned for numerous miracles, decisively declared that Pharaoh had been deified.

I have, at times, witnessed many things conceived by these demons and hidden from human knowledge. For instance, I encountered numerous silver rings worn by Spaniards, which quite a few uninformed individuals carried devoutly as protective charms against various perils. I eventually disassembled these rings, teaching the wearers about the malevolence of such practices. It's crucial not to assume that these names were borrowed from the language employed by the demons among themselves, as they do not require a language when they communicate as spiritual entities. Given that they comprehend all things through intellect rather than sensory perception, as mentioned on previous occasions, they convey their concepts to one another across varying distances. It is more plausible to consider that they employ some form of barbaric language among themselves. Certain knowledgeable

individuals, albeit with some reluctance on my part, suspect it might be Egyptian, especially since the Egyptians had consistently engaged with the demons more closely and extensively, embracing their worship.

These names were emphasized in these superstitious practices due to their obscurity. They instantly captivated the admiration of people already inclined toward such beliefs, leading common individuals to attribute significance to these enigmatic and barbaric names, even in times preceding the great flood. Notably, none of these names find mention or significance in sacred scripture. Names like Got, Giber, Gabir, Cadebru, and six hundred others were attributed to them to make them more appealing to certain superstitious individuals, particularly when these names were combined with specific ancient and barbaric symbols, interspersed with lines, pentacles, and seals. People employed their own instruments for various purposes, not as sustenance like animals but as means for conveying secret signs. We cannot glean sufficient evidence from these seals to assert that demons used distinct letters among themselves, as some have conjectured.

One who holds this opinion is Ambrose Theisen, the author of a book on various alphabets. In this work, he asserts that a specific spirit transcribed a unique configuration of letters that differs from anything else obtainable. However, these spirits do not rely on letters, just as they do not require sensory perception in their operations. Once they receive something, they never forget it. This was recently demonstrated in Emilia by a magician from Felsina and transferred to Milan by another. They were delighted by the enchanting music they produced, having played several instruments, and engaged in a spirited discussion about the nature of the soul for over two hours.

When they grasped the perspectives of Anerrbois, the magician, they wholeheartedly embraced them. They not only referenced the writings of the aforementioned author, who remains undiscovered to us, but frequently recited the author's exact words, if not the very ideas themselves. Consequently, they faced a pitiable fate as they stubbornly adhered to their beliefs and started following the guidance of demons in the hope of gaining favor. They did not hesitate to attribute rare or even non-existent instances of

false answers to demons bound by higher authority. This delusion persisted as they genuinely believed that demons existed not in reality but solely in their imagination, which they unquestionably followed.

It should not be particularly surprising, as demons, subject to a higher authority, seldom, if ever, provide misleading answers to those in their service. They even convinced themselves that these spirits constantly served them in every conceivable manner.

Returning to the point we momentarily departed from, it has been observed that demons have inscribed specific characters. They do not do this out of necessity for themselves, but rather for the benefit of those they interact with. These malevolent beings often impose solemn obligations on their most unfortunate slaves, similar to the lord's demand for fidelity and the vassal's requirement of faithlessness. In some instances, they employ written symbols to achieve this purpose.

Furthermore, they seek to obtain divine honors through maritime rituals. These practices are far removed from virtuous miracles and are closely associated with malevolent ones, as they believe that an unjust amount of power is ascribed to these rites. Such superstitious customs, with origins in Egypt and including the observance of sacred days, have been denounced as impious.

Demons also introduced hydromancy, a practice akin to that of Numa Pompilius, the Roman king who was said to engage in it. Numa allegedly displayed himself in various ways to be observed by spirits and images in a consecrated pool, submerging himself in the water to gain insight into future events. This superstition, which originated with the Greeks and passed to the Romans, was initiated by the Dardanians, as recorded in the books of Dardanus. Numa claimed to have received it through his interactions with the nymph Egeria.

In a similar vein, pyromancy, attributed to its inventor Amphiaraus, revealed future events through the various movements of flames, lightning, light, and sound. Recently, the devil deceived superstitious Lithuanians and

Samogitians who sought his counsel regarding the future. They believed that if a person suffering from an illness saw their shadow cast towards the firelight, it was a certain sign of recovery. Conversely, if the shadow extended away from the light, it was regarded as a harbinger of death.

Additionally, they practiced aeromancy, a method that the Moors still employ for divination. It involves interpreting different wind patterns, the composition of the air, and the appearance of the stars to extract various predictions.

Thus, through geomancy, which falsely attributes power from the soul, this superstition suggests that by using specific figures, the mind can receive information easily. This happens when the senses are entirely dormant, either through a spiritual light emanating from the mind itself or through an influx from above. It's as if the clear air receives the sun's rays or mirrors the images of tangible objects. However, it's essential to recognize that no one can gain knowledge of anything unless they have discovered it independently or learned it from the teachings of others.

It's also important not to assume that geomancy's origins lie in the movements of celestial bodies. What is sought often depends on the will of higher powers and not on the intelligence of Saturn, an astral entity thought to be the instrument. The intelligences that grant virtue to the stars, various lights, and the motion of the heavens never depart from the celestial spheres. They rely primarily on their own essence and will, just as they require divine assistance to move the heavens. Lower angels, of their own accord, do not involve themselves in such matters, especially superstitious ones, as they would go against divine prohibition. It is also not a gift from God, as their services are dedicated to loftier purposes, such as safeguarding the bodies and souls of the righteous and other more significant tasks.

Therefore, the only plausible source for all of this is demons alone. I recall a notable geomancer who frequently tested this. He renounced everything related to demonic influence with solemn protestations and could no longer extract any truth from this superstition, even though he had previously practiced it diligently and had indeed foreseen the outcomes of events.

Furthermore, the world has been burdened with similar superstitious nonsense through the pouring of lead. When the superstitious seek answers to dubious questions from Saturn, to whom they attribute this metal, by melting lead and assuming it will reveal information, they persuade themselves that Saturn, linked to the metal and demons, will respond. They believe that by melting lead, they can resolve certain bewitchments and have pledged to undo specific spells. I am intrigued to learn from them the source of such great weakness that prevents them from keeping lead away from fire when, in terms of mobility, it obeys their commands, offering no resistance whatsoever.

So, how can we assert that all these practices have origins other than in the arts of demons? The same can be said for aeromancy and capnomancy, where they scrutinize the motion of smoke and the flow of air. Consider cosmology as well, along with a certain body of knowledge that the Arabs erroneously refer to as "Kabbalah." In this system, they claim the ability to predict a wide array of things based on specific figures and the sequence of Arabic letters. They also profess knowledge through "theophany," "onomancy," and other methods known to the Hebrews. For example, through "chyromancy," under which this ancient serpent cunningly conceals itself; through "physiognomy"; and ultimately, through "astrology," the progenitor of all these arts.

Particularly with astrology, upon closer examination, it becomes evident that it has been tainted by the techniques of demons, which led the Egyptians and Indians into idolatry. Even the Hebrews, although instructed in the true worship of God, were not entirely immune to this superstitious influence. However, the pious and just King Josiah eradicated it when he removed the worship of the sun, moon, and all celestial entities from their midst. Nonetheless, this is not the same astrology that Abraham taught the Egyptian priests. It involved the interpretation of the heavens, their movements, the determination of auspicious times, and the influence of the stars on earthly matters. These aspects differ from the way events are arranged and governed by God through the influence of celestial forces, star positions, the lines on hands, bird flight, and even their songs. Therefore, when a prediction derived from these practices aligns with actual events, it is similarly attributed to the

workings of demons.

Therefore, divination through dreams, and subsequently, when the Lord began to appear in dreams, it has insinuated itself into the minds of the people. While some dreams are triggered by natural factors, the influence of celestial bodies, and revelations from angels, demons often manage to infiltrate them. They are particularly inclined to do so when they are summoned by those who employ fasting, prayers, the burning of incense, specific saints' invocations, various herbs, leaves, stones, and the drawing of circles to facilitate their entry.

These practitioners meticulously adhere to specific times, days, and hours, to which they ascribe distinct virtues and malevolence. They light a precise number of candles and engage in actions that our devout believers who pray earnestly or venerate saints' relics find objectionable.

Many other superstitions of this nature, even more reprehensible, persist today among individuals who bear the Christian name but are even more errant in their conduct than pagans themselves. This, at the very least, represents the most deplorable aspect of the situation. For it is sheer madness and a profound derangement for those who have embraced the name of Christ, particularly at the moment of their consecration to the Christian faith through the blessing of holy water, to collaborate with the enemy of God and humanity through the most vile apostasy. For what fellowship does Christ have with Belial? And what association does Christ have with those whom we rightly wish to rejoice in His name?

Furthermore, there exists another category of superstitions, wherein demons, known as Notariac demons, are overtly summoned. This practice occurs primarily when individuals are influenced by a medley of superstitions and rituals, occasionally even entailing the use of human blood, as witnessed both in ancient and more recent idolatrous traditions. This nefarious variant of necromancy, referred to as such by the Greeks, once entailed the reanimation of the deceased. Reliable accounts testify to the fact that both Ulysses, following the demise of Elpenor, and Aeneas, subsequent to the loss of Misenus, their respective leaders during their maritime wanderings, engaged

in consultations with the deceased. Simon Magus, the mentor of the heretic Menander, provides further evidence of this, as he twice offered his own son, Nicetas, to the odious and malevolent spirits bearing names like Egyn, Paymon, Aymon, Oriens, and Hecate.

Similarly, there was a historical belief that souls of the departed could be conjured, but this notion is erroneous, for only bodies, animated by their inherent essence (as will be expounded upon later), have the capacity for motion. This illicit art encompassed the summoning of deceased spirits through what the Greeks termed "Necromancy." Practitioners often employed purple flowers, aromatic herbs, various blood offerings, and incantations, along with other rituals they believed would render individuals more receptive to demonic influence. An illustration of this can be found in the Indian tale of Zebacco, where souls, manifesting in the likeness of their former bodies, were invoked under the appellation "Zebacco," which corresponds to what the Hebrews call "Mechoval." Many ancient authorities subscribed to the notion, as evidenced in the annals of pagan history. For instance, we have an account of Homer being summoned from the underworld by Appion the Grammarian, who sought elucidation on unresolved matters in his writings, long after Homer's passing. In our sacred scriptures, there is a parallel example when, at the Pythoness's behest, Saul had the soul of the Prophet Samuel summoned to prophesy the outcome of a war. Many Mechubalim among the Hebrews maintain that this was a genuine phenomenon, asserting that souls, within the first year of death, endure a state of affliction unless they undergo a prescribed cycle of prayers.

According to this perspective, there are still individuals today who, as someone nears the end of their life, request the moribund to extend their right hand. They do this with the hope of glimpsing the departing soul, although more often than not, these spirits do not reveal themselves and may even deceive those seeking contact. Contemporary theologians, however, strongly oppose this belief, contending that souls cannot be summoned in any manner. They argue that once detached from their earthly vessels, souls lack the inherent ability to perceive independently and can only do so through the divine essence upon their creation. Furthermore, these theologians maintain that the soul can solely acquire such knowledge through divine revelation or

prior to its union with the divine.

They argue that individuals who were devout servants of God, such as the soul of Samuel after his righteous passing, are beyond the influence of demons. Instead, they peacefully rest in the company of the righteous, enjoying the blessed repose they have earned. The literal account of Samuel being summoned in sacred scriptures, they argue, should not be taken as a straightforward occurrence, as Scripture often employs figurative language.

It is worth noting that what people perceived might have been a trickery of demonic illusions, and there is no evidence that these manifestations had a basis in reality. This could be attributed to the observers' perception or perhaps a deliberate blindness cast upon their eyes. Once the soul separates from the body, reuniting them is beyond human art, force, or even demonic powers, as it rests solely within the domain of divine authority. Bringing souls back or reuniting them with their bodies is not possible, even through fantastical or fictitious means. Even demons lack the capability to do this, except when they are afflicted, in which case divine justice punishes them with appropriate penalties, not necessarily due to any wrong they have committed, but as just and fitting consequences, as theologians often assert.

Demons are incapable of representing souls as though they were static images. Their inherent limitations prevent them from doing so, and this ability is beyond their reach. Souls in purgatory undergo various forms of purification and trial, but it is incorrect to suggest that demons manipulate them or hold power over them. Purgatorial souls are purified from their imperfections and, through divine justice, they endure suffering as part of their purification process. While they are still affected by earthly emotions, their suffering differs from the torments of the damned. Demons' role is limited to executing divine justice's prescribed penalties, which will persist until the world's end.

If, as some claim, it were possible to summon souls from different realms and manipulate their presence at will, divine justice would be compromised. It would lead to constant disruptions in predetermined order, based on personal desires. Even if, by divine permission or arrangement, souls could return to

impart knowledge about their immortality and state, bolstering our faith, it might be plausible, in line with the example of Samuel in Ecclesiastes, where it is said, "He slept with his fathers and made an end of his life." This idea is also reflected in the life of St. Martin, through the episode of a thief's shadow.

Furthermore, malevolent spirits do exist, openly and explicitly influenced not by human art but by the potency of harmful symbols intentionally created for nefarious purposes. They are invoked to bring about harm, death, and destruction to fulfill the intentions of those who engage in malevolent acts. Additionally, plagues that afflict humanity often have origins beyond our immediate understanding.

Through various malevolent practices and love potions, as will be elucidated later, individuals can be lured into performing extraordinary feats with the permission of God. Certain ancient priests and wise figures, endowed with human wisdom, were ensnared by the deceit and guile of these spirits. They sought salvation for their own souls through a practice known as theurgy, a deceptive art. Through this, they falsely believed they could atone for their sins by making sacrifices and performing consecrations called "Teletas." They held the misguided belief that salvation could be attained through these means. Consequently, all evils, both temporal and eternal, emanated from this source, leading to their woeful plight. It's truly a pitiable condition that they thought salvation could be drawn from such a source.

These same demons were also responsible for imparting magical arts, but not those related to the exploration of natural secrets where legitimate benefits are often derived through active and passive applications. Instead, they taught deceptive and harmful practices of mathematics, which were deemed so perilous and destructive that their use was openly prohibited by both ancient and more recent authorities. This led to the expulsion of Adelruna the sorceress, who was credited as the origin of the Huns, and the burning of the Dardanian books, as well as those ascribed to Numa Pompilius by Senate authority. These texts contained this vain and superstitious art, and those who practiced it were justly consumed by flames.

Nero, initially inquisitive about exploring magical arts, later suppressed them

due to a lack of concrete signs or evidence of their efficacy. In his time, Pliny attested that the emperor regarded these arts as frivolous and entirely false. As a result, those Jews and followers of Muhammad who engaged in these arts also faced condemnation and punishment.

On the other hand, the Egyptians have long been immersed in these superstitions, more so than any other nation. They held the belief that specific angels aided them in their theurgical operations, a misguided notion they clung to instead of recognizing the true nature of these entities as demons. What's particularly noteworthy is that holy angels, now confirmed in grace, abhor these practices with greater aversion than a dog does a snake, as the saying goes. They recognize that these actions go against not only divine will but even the most trivial matters. In contrast, they diligently adhere to divine precepts.

To further ensnare themselves in the allure of these vanities, the Egyptians exposed themselves to the radiance of these spirits, creating a captivating illusion, albeit one not devoid of skepticism. Just as a thousand other artisans adapt their methods when one approach fails, those unable to achieve their aims openly resort to subterfuge, even taking on the guise of angels. Therefore, it's not without reason that the Cabalists assert that these same letters pertain to both the name of God and the devil.

Many philosophers, well-versed in these arts, engaged in their practice, including figures like Abaris the Hyperborean, Empedocles of Agrigentum, Pythagoras of Samos (who was considered Tuscan by some), Apollonius of Tyana, and numerous Platonists, such as Porphyry of Tyre and Iamblichus of Egypt. They believed that a particular quality inherent in the ethereal realm formed the foundation of their wisdom. However, these philosophers, relying on their personal wisdom and convictions, often hindered themselves and others from attaining genuine wisdom.

These impure spirits have also attempted various other endeavors through the arts of Goetia and Pharmacia. These arts are equally perilous and harmful to both the physical and spiritual well-being of individuals. Through these practices, they perpetrate terrible and abominable acts, resulting in profound

harm to humanity. They inflame the most ignoble passions, as seen in the cases of Amon and Antiochus, one of whom succumbed to wicked lust for his sister, and the other for his stepmother. These spirits, against the will of their victims, pretended to offer assistance. Such deceit is not surprising, as these spirits often approach humans through guile and secrecy rather than openly or in direct confrontation.

This invention is falsely attributed to Solomon, while it was, in fact, discovered much earlier by the Egyptians and Chaldeans. Some resorted to making sacrifices to their personal guardian spirits in an attempt to avert evil and seek happiness through temptation. Regrettably, these individuals eventually descended into madness, to the extent that they convinced themselves, through arcane languages and secret words, along with specific symbols, that they could bind and compel these malevolent spirits against their will.

It is regrettable that even in this enlightened era, some of the most enlightened individuals continue to engage with these diabolical shadows.

There are very few of these most sinful necromancers who do not meet a cruel and violent death, rather than a peaceful one. They are often driven to the depths of despair. This makes it clear that demons cannot be involuntarily bound through these means. Moreover, no heavenly power, as some believe, has been bestowed upon them as punishment. Such a belief would yield an inappropriate outcome: that those who practice these superstitions would remain blameless. This is entirely false and would only embolden them in their crimes.

By observing the stars, they commonly convince themselves that their work must be conducted under a specific constellation. While I do not deny that some of their endeavors are influenced by planetary alignments to the extent that they cannot achieve their goals unless they adhere to the prescribed star, others are so subservient that they carry out their deeds regardless of the star they choose to observe. It's also plausible that angelic vigilance often thwarts their nefarious acts, and they feign reliance on constellations to garner more respect among humans. In doing so, they attempt to cast a shameful shadow

on the heavenly bodies themselves.

In most cases, it is to be feared that their secret activities harbor greater malevolence than their overt operations. Furthermore, those addicted to such superstitions employ strange and obscure words that, despite their uniqueness, possess no inherent power to bind demons as they believe. They hold the false belief that they can compel demons to obey them not by virtue of any specific words but rather through hidden agreements and pacts, whether covert or overt, made with humans.

I won't question the notion that specific Hebrew names hold power over these spirits, both for summoning and banishing them, as long as they are pronounced with precision. Orpheus, for valid reasons, advocated for the preservation of these names in their original form. However, it's important to note that he didn't believe these names inherently possessed this power, as if it were infused into them by nature. These names neither produce sound nor physically interact with any substance; their influence is solely in commanding the spirits. If they did receive any such power, it would have come from Adam during his state of innocence. In that pristine state, Adam assigned names to all things in accordance with their natural state, as he held dominion over both heavenly and earthly matters at the time. This is why even angels, when using a tangible voice, communicate in Hebrew, regardless of their origin, especially when interacting with humans. There is no doubt that this is done by a unique divine secret, as this language, symbolizing a state of pristine integrity, emanates from it. It was bestowed from the very beginning, not as a punishment for sin like the subsequent languages but as an inherent part of its condition.

It's possible that demons employ these barbaric words to seek greater notoriety and to express supreme contempt for God. Almighty God consecrated this language for His own worship and designated it as sacred. In the latter days, when there will be one shepherd and one flock, this language will become nearly universal, shared among all regions and nations. Some believe it will be the native language for all in the heavenly homeland, while others argue that it will endure in some form. Notably, a few Jewish Talmudists have affirmed this, given its exceptional origin, rooted not in sin

like other languages but in the condition of inherent integrity. Claims by Chaldeans and Phrygians, who falsely boast of its origin as their own, should not be accepted in this regard.

Furthermore, it's important not to entertain the notion, as necromancers suggest, that demons approach due to the characters or symbols they employ, feigning compliance with these symbols. They craft horrifying and dreadful apparitions and storms upon their arrival, making it seem as though they are compelled, when in reality, they come willingly, driven by deception. In fact, they actively seek opportunities to deceive, and nothing pleases them more. Why would these humans, their subservient subjects, inspire such great fear in them, as these necromancers claim? The power of these individuals is vastly inferior, to the extent that it cannot be compared. As the Apostle himself attests, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world."

Therefore, they are not tightly bound or confined to a specific location in a way that completely prevents their departure. Often, they have been observed to depart from there, even though they return by their own agreement. Moreover, they do not readily obey just anyone who calls upon them, for they are cunning, much like those who cast spells. However, they do comply when invoked according to the customary times of observation. Perhaps they do so because they understand that they are hindered by angels or that their promises are not considered entirely reliable, even by their own principles, as if they were worthy of trust.

It is truly lamentable and deserving of tears that a significant portion of humanity willingly submits to this dreadful diabolical yoke in pursuit of frivolous desires. As it has been said, all the wealth and pleasures of the entire world hold no benefit when weighed against the loss or exchange of a single soul. They do not act in this manner due to the influence of Saturn or some other ill-fated star, as some may imagine, nor are they compelled by a malevolent planet. Rather, they willingly entangle themselves in these diabolical complexities, displaying a blindness even greater than moles in their judgment.

These individuals falsely believe that these magical signs, whether through words, herbs, or gems, possess some unique power from heaven or art, as depicted by figures like Zoroaster and Zabulus. Any such power that may appear to exist has been falsely ascribed through deceptive diabolical deception. We will delve further into this subject in its appropriate context, particularly regarding images. For now, it suffices to say that this power is in no way inherent in nature, as corporeal things draw from the incorporeal, which possess far greater power and scope. They do not derive this power from any capacity to obey, an ability that God has enjoined upon other entities, lest it appears there is an opportunity for friendship with them. On the contrary, the Apostle strictly warns against any dealings with them, cautioning us to guard against all interactions with demons.

However, it is true that they come when invoked and appear ready to obey, by the authority and command of higher powers whose names are kept secret under those seals and characters. This occurs not because they seek sustenance like brute creatures, as previously mentioned, but because they come as spirits to their designated symbols and concealed instruments. Other demons willingly submit to these higher ones by adhering to their vices. Hence, they can be compelled even if they attempt to depart to various places. Nevertheless, they all share the same purpose and a unanimous spirit and mind, not due to any inherent nobility but because of their deeply entrenched malice, which has developed during their wretched servitude. When they manifest themselves, they do so at their own discretion, creating an illusion that they serve within rings, seals, and tablets for their own purposes.

It should not be surprising to anyone that, in the practice of compelling demons, angelic names are frequently invoked. However, some individuals shamefully abuse divine appellations and the prayers of the saints. Some Kabbalists assert that only specific divine names, which include the names of thrones, dominations, and seraphim, can deter demons. They argue that these names signify God's love, mercy, piety, salvation, freedom, and indwelling, and therefore demons are repelled by them. In contrast, they claim that demons are not deterred by names signifying God's justice and power

because they often masquerade as good angels. They argue that God employs both good and evil spirits as ministering entities and cites examples such as Pope Gregory's account of an angel with a sword during a divine outburst against the holy city, which led to the renaming of the Mausoleum of Hadrian as the Castle of the Angel.

Furthermore, they claim similar occurrences happened to Saint Jerome, who had a strong attachment to Cicero, and Pope Dino Antonio. In the case of unbelievers, especially when God's justice must confront persistent and obstinate sinners, the execution of justice is entrusted to evil angels. This is evident in instances such as the punishment of the stubborn Pharaoh and the wicked Herod.

In their wickedness, demons seem to be influenced by various elements to attract magicians. They mock God, represented through the circle of Egypt, and persuade people that entering a circle and pentagon containing God's names will protect them from demonic harm. This blasphemous idea is attributed to the Egyptians and Hebrews, who sought safety even from their own women, believing them to be under the influence of demons capable of harming their offspring. They drew circles in their bedrooms with specific Hebrew characters representing divine names, thinking that invoking different divine names would lead to desired effects.

Additionally, there are other superstitious practices involving demons among common people. They instruct women to prepare various dishes for demons known as "little men," believing that doing so will ensure the prosperity of their children and purify them. It is not irrelevant to digress and mention other evil deeds associated with those who pretend to be compelled by demons in this superstitious art, openly committing such acts. This has led to stories of the cave of Salmatica being closed off, the lake of Nurfi being guarded, and the cave of Visingius serving as a secret refuge for practitioners of this art due to its consequences.

These malevolent spirits are not inherently inclined toward all forms of wickedness, as some may have believed. They are intelligent beings of a fundamentally good nature and substance, ordained to serve the greater good

of the universe. They inherently desire the object of their will, which is the universal good, and have never been the cause or occasion of any evil, neither here on Earth nor in heaven. The wrongdoing has been perpetrated by their own creators, as seen in the fall of Adam, which resulted in the ruin of the entire human race. However, it does not necessarily mean we commit no sins unless they incite us through our own free will.

The more intensely we harbor hatred against them and learn to shield ourselves from their harmful influence, the more God permits them to manifest in horrifying and fearsome forms. This is permitted as a unique guidance so that we may be instructed by witnessing the terrifying nature of these apparitions in the afterlife. Therefore, they frequently appear in various horrifying forms and can transform into different frightening objects. When seen, they momentarily shed their true forms.

In contrast to Plato's followers, some argue that these spirits, while subject to corruption in their bodies and not composed of dense matter, are still incorruptible, especially in their essence. They falsely believe that souls are surrounded by these spirits. Consequently, most Latin theologians, especially the Scholastics, differ from them, asserting that these spirits are not naturally united to bodies since they lack any material substance. They argue that if these spirits were united to any body, it would be impossible for them to have existed many centuries before the creation of material nature, especially when considering their consistency with Greek philosophy. Bodies, according to this perspective, cannot exist without a physical location. Thus, it is evident that these spirits are not connected to any physical form.

One might object, suggesting that perhaps they were subjected to such punishment after committing their initial transgressions, and that they were endowed with bodies since the creation of the world, experiencing more severe torments. However, attempting to avoid one problem leads to another, as if they were only associated with bodies as agents and therefore suffered from us, as they claim, like prisoners from a jailer, this contradicts the Gospel's truth. The Gospel makes it clear that seven demons were cast out from Mary Magdalene and that a demon named Legion was expelled from a possessed man. Thus, if they were bound to an indivisible connection with

bodies, how could a single individual house so many of them? Consequently, it is reasonable to conclude that these demons are not bound to any type of physical body, whether dense or ethereal. Even Saint Augustine, in his discussion of angels, appears to agree with this view, which is far less obscure or dense.

It is also of no consequence when they assert that demons can manipulate and alter bodies according to their will, because if that were the case, it would necessitate them occupying space due to their number, as any material entity, even if it were ethereal in nature, must. No matter how compressed the body might be, it would still be impossible for a legion of them to be contained within a single human body. Furthermore, this argument is not relieved when it is proposed that demons can only be bound within hollow rings due to the inherent characteristics of their bodies. Some Thalmudists claim that these beings are corporeal, and certain Rabbis allege to have witnessed multiple demons suspended from a single knot in a rope, possibly executed to deceive more effectively through sheer imagination.

The assertion of the ancient Etruscans that these beings leave behind ashes when compelled by others also fails to present a convincing argument. This could easily be an illusion, as demons are exceptionally adept at assuming various forms. They frequently manifest these forms during slumber, employing various tricks, rapid shape-shifting, and swift actions. It is also irrelevant that some have concocted the notion that, like the blessed after a hypothetical general resurrection, demons will occupy specific locations. Were this the case, they would not originate from any internal principles of nature, but rather from a state of glory in which demons have never existed and will never exist. Therefore, when these deceitful spirits manifest themselves before our eyes, they adopt bodies from elsewhere. However, they are by no means permanently attached to these bodies as matter to form or as mere movers to the mobile. Instead, they employ these bodies as vessels to represent themselves.

They are more commonly observed during the night than during the day and strive to invoke fear through various deceptions and rapid changes in appearance. Nothing in these bodies can be perceived, in contrast to the

images of stones, plants, or animals, which are visible. Although the New Testament does not suggest that they receive external tears from humans, this is not due to their lack of the power to do so but because they are prohibited from doing so by angels. It is likely that this prohibition arises from reverence for the incarnate Word. Angels do not allow themselves to be adored in His presence, as we read in the Apocalypse. However, this seems to differ from the situation in the Old Testament, where Abraham encountered three angels, recognized a trinity under the unity of divine light, adored one of them, and bowed to him. Yet, it is not permissible for them to reveal their internal cunning or the grotesque nature of the forms they assume, which are even more unsightly than their outward appearances.

Hence, when they manifest themselves in human guise, they mimic the angels who appeared to Abraham. By assuming this human appearance, they seem to allude to the incarnation of the Son of God, hinting at a partnership with us. Frequently, they craft goat-like and deer-like feet for themselves, attributes they've grown accustomed to concealing by adopting a more elongated and ethereal form. There are records of their appearing in such forms to individuals like Alexander, a monk at Genialia, as well as in the guise of Centaurs, Fauns, and Satyrs in wooded areas, forests, and desolate places.

Saint Anthony, a figure renowned for his sanctity and erudition in Upper Egypt, encountered a demon in this form, which greatly startled the monk. The demon, it is said, addressed him in a manner reminiscent of the deceptive serpent and claimed, "I am one of those whom the deluded Gentiles worshipped as gods."

In Scotland, three men named Machabeus, Manchus, and Dunchanus, who enjoyed high regard, were thrice visited by demons under the guise of Nymphs. These encounters were marked by predictions that were subsequently confirmed, greatly pleasing those involved. The Scottish historian Boethius attests to the remarkable nature of these predictions among the Scots.

Demons have also been known to take on the likeness of animals, a practice

that gained prominence after the Lord Himself demonstrated symbolic and overt signs to them. Previously, they had the ability to alter their form, but this became more prevalent after the manifestation of Christ. For instance, He appeared as a ram to Bacchus, leading him to water in the arid deserts of Libya when he was suffering from thirst. They also took the form of ravens on the Diomedean Islands, revealing themselves as Greeks to all who arrived there. Similarly, they assumed the shape of crows within the temple of Jupiter Hammon, which Alexander the Great eagerly desired to visit. There are even accounts of them appearing as black birds, guiding a man's soul to the underworld.

They once even manifested themselves to a certain Spaniard, adopting the guise of a very dark-skinned man who frequently sought their invocation to alleviate his toothache. Much like one would refrain from uttering the name of an ill-fated horse, he dared not speak the name of the afflicted man he aimed to curse. Instead, he communicated not through words but by mere gestures, directing his gaze.

Similarly, demons revealed themselves to Saint Edmund during his journey to Aberdeen, a mere few years past. They assumed grotesque, deformed forms, appearing as a menacing dog before certain Cantabrians whom they had lured into secret worship of Satan. They have also taken on the likenesses of numerous other creatures. However, their most common choice is that of fearsome animals, a shape granted to them solely by God's unique love. Through these terrifying visages, we are reminded of their true nature. While their internal malevolence and desire to harm us are infinitely worse, if their wickedness were visible to our eyes, it would be even more horrifying.

These demonic beings do not always appear to be of the same age, even when they assume human forms. On occasion, they present themselves as young men, and at other times, as elderly men. They can even take on the appearance of children. Their appearances are incredibly diverse, and they recognize that different forms allow for better opportunities to deceive. They often employ this diversity, not as individual entities, but as a collective, presenting themselves as multiple beings with varying conditions, thereby suggesting that one among them holds a higher rank than the others.

Sometimes, they even opt to portray themselves as if teetering on the precipice of death, all in a calculated effort to more effectively kindle within us the ember of salvation, just as they have cunningly done with certain heretical philosophers and followers of Muhammad. However, these elusive spirits do not confine themselves to a fixed nature; at times, they take on the guise of females, and at other times, they assume the form of males. Otherwise, how else would these spirits commune with the likes of animals, birds, fish, plants, rocks, and stones, whose very shapes they have often adopted? The answer is, they cannot. So, when the situation demands, how do they accomplish this feat?

Notwithstanding, I do not deny that they have frequently donned various forms corresponding to their varying degrees of substance, much like their choice of appearances based on the locales they inhabit. For example, they may appear as terrestrial creatures, with darker visages, or as aquatic beings, displaying transparent and clearer features. Furthermore, when taking on an airy presence, they exude a radiant and awe-inspiring countenance. Take, for instance, when they manifest as ethereal beings adorned with celestial luminescence, seemingly more majestic and venerable than others. It's important to clarify that they do not draw this radiance from the stars, as some have erroneously believed, for the heavens possess nothing that can be hewn from them, nor can they receive it from fire that could consume them. These spirits exert no dominion over the properties of the elements, which are the exclusive province of God, just as He commanded that the young boys cast into the fiery furnace be visible but remain unscathed. Nevertheless, the nature of these spirits bears a certain resemblance and alignment with these elements, which, whether through their inherent forms or other attributes, serve to more or less distinctly reveal the essence of these spirits.

Those who frequently desire to present themselves as angels of light, all for the purpose of beguiling with greater ease, momentarily wear this facade. They do not do so for extended periods or with great frequency, for they do not yearn to be seen as such, even though they yearn to be seen in a manner that showcases their apparent superiority over mortals by virtue of their nature. It is worth noting that two such beings once revealed themselves to a

freedman of Pliny's, a man of no small learning. As the man was in the midst of shaving, he beheld two young men, clad in white raiment, emerging from a doorway while removing their shoes. In another instance, one of these spirits appeared to King Rathbod of the Frisians in the form of a resplendent golden house, adorned with a multitude of precious gems and pearls, shimmering with gold. It displayed tables laden with gold. There are also accounts of these spirits appearing to some followers of Muhammad, assuming the guise of certain saints in moments of need and distress, swathed in the saintly vestments.

Nevertheless, theologians unanimously assert that these apparitions are not composed of earthly or watery substance. This isn't because they lack the ability to vanish from our sight at will but rather because they cannot abruptly disperse these images without revealing their essence, as if it were the power of the spirits themselves. This revelation would effectively prevent them from appearing once more. It is far from certain that they can merely think or speak these apparitions away, as some have suggested. Such reasoning is frivolous and futile because, in this context, their nature doesn't undermine their control; instead, they adhere to it. This is due to the fact that these two elements, as elementary as they may be, cannot persist when they are not in a blended state, and they cannot withstand the characteristics of these spirits.

These representations of physical entities, as easily as they materialize, are condemned and dispersed by means of evaporation. They don't command all the elements or dictate their degree of mobility, but rather they influence them partially, ensuring that the natural order remains undisturbed and followed. Therefore, all effects stemming from superior or benevolent beings only transpire with the involvement of angels and the approval of God.

Continuing with our discussion: Demons, at their discretion, assume these forms through their own volition. However, it's essential to clarify that they do not do so by merely manipulating the subtle and delicate air that can be molded by color and shape, as some have erroneously believed. Neither is it solely from a denser substance, as has been suggested by others. As Scotus and some opposing opinions have made clear, it's a combination of these elements, an incomplete mixture of both active and passive attributes. They

exist under their own aspect of heaven, assuming and combining as they see fit. This is a certainty. Moreover, when wicked spirits manifest themselves, they leave behind a sulfuric and foul residue, as has been experienced by many, including myself, as I write this. During sleep, I underwent a test of this matter. On a particular night, I was oppressed by an incubus, experiencing a great difficulty and heaviness. I seemed to grasp something soft with my hand, and upon examination, I detected an intense foul odor. It was so pungent that it rivaled even my experiences in Pozzuoli. For the next two days, I suffered from the lingering heaviness of this odor each time I blew my nose.

As demons take on these bodies, they assume a variety of appearances to our senses, altering their limbs and adorning themselves with colors and shapes as they see fit. They seem to do so swiftly, often beyond the grasp of our imagination, either by presenting themselves in a sort of transparency, making them entirely imperceptible, or by obstructing the medium through which their forms would otherwise reach our eyes. They obstruct their own likenesses or obstruct deep imaginings where all senses, external and internal, are overridden. In this way, they carry out their actions, manifesting through diverse bodies yet possessing no actual control over the sensory faculties, be they negative or sensitive, of the soul or over the apparent external members they assume. By their very nature, they lack the ability to move organically, nor do they possess flesh, as the truth asserts, for "Feel and see, for a spirit does not have bones and flesh." They thus demonstrate that nothing unnatural can endure.

Hence, the ears, eyes, and noses they adopt do not serve them as they do us. Instead, they employ them differently: to masquerade as false humans or to deceive us with these sensory organs and confound us. In truth, they bear a strong resemblance to images painted on a wall or statues hewn from marble, for demons do not possess physical organs or an entire body; rather, they function as a sponge or, more aptly, a reflecting mirror, receiving the images of things, as Psellus and many others have often expounded. What appears to be sensory activity is, in reality, the outcome of their intellect and will, as we have consistently affirmed. This is why, through their comprehensive knowledge of all things, they can deduce the specifics in the reverse order

and accomplish a few tasks, much like we do.

It is of little consequence that when they speak, their words do not elicit in us the physical signs of emotional responses, nor can they, like us, manipulate air using lungs—an essential mechanism for articulating speech through both exhalation and inhalation. Their mental constructs do not adhere to our model either, and it is irrelevant that their sounds, though not significantly distinct from our articulate words, emanate from a fictional body fashioned and introduced into the air, then expelled from it. They manipulate it for their purposes, enabling external touch and impact to resonate within human ears, enhancing human voices. More often than not, they accomplish this within the ear itself.

In this manner, Simonides, when called away from his house, promptly departed just before its collapse, a truly remarkable and significant escape from the throngs of people. It serves as a clear testament to the profound care and wisdom with which individuals guided by God are endowed. Moreover, demons do not perceive our voices as we do. Instead, they employ a distinct faculty, applying it from the realm of ideas and their own substance, much like their use of other abilities, albeit in a different manner, tailored to the suitability of their nature, exceeding our capacity for imagination.

Hence, it becomes evident that when demons take on these forms, their actions are confined to the realm of movement. Nevertheless, when they manifest in human guise, a privilege that God grants only for the utmost utility, their primary intent is not to instill fear but to deceive us. Their approach is designed to catch us off guard, making it easier for them to achieve their desires. They often present themselves as strangers, religious figures, or even deceased individuals from our own families or acquaintances, mimicking their appearances and behaviors. Some possess an uncanny radiance, not due to a contradiction of their nature, as they are incorporeal beings, but rather because of more heinous transgressions committed. These are known as the harbingers of ominous nocturnal creatures, presenting themselves in a terrifying fashion. They have the ability to extinguish lit candles and torches with their breath. This subterranean breed of demons dwells in hidden places and frequently subjects human

bodies to their chilling effects.

Others are not averse to light and appear both day and night. They are not as formidable and are considered to be aerial spirits. At times, they become so familiar and seemingly domesticated with humans that they mimic our behavior by pretending to eat and drink, although in reality, they only break and consume their own substance. Some mistakenly believe that they actually consume physical food, which is a serious misconception. They make a false allusion to the opinions of the Talmudists regarding Hazazele, whom the Cabalists claim has dominion over corpses. They assert that Hazazele consumes the flesh of the living and feasts on the bodies of the deceased, as documented in demon lore. They describe how two individuals, Aisutus and Edmundus, who were the closest of friends during their lifetime and desired to live and die together, made a pact. After one of them died, the other was found alive but partially mutilated beside the deceased body. Some Platonists also seem to affirm a similar belief, suggesting that these spirits often devour the flesh of exceptional young men and boys. They claim that these spirits are driven by an insatiable rage and desire to perform a divine act while the victims are alive, akin to the violent transformations of dead bodies into wild beasts and Molossian dogs. Those who believe these claims are somewhat deluded because, as mentioned earlier, demons are incorporeal and do not possess an appetite for food like corporeal creatures.

It shouldn't be surprising to anyone that they delight in corpses, as they were divinely cursed, taking the form of a serpent, and were destined to feed on the earth throughout their days. Therefore, it is said that the Angel Michael disputed with a demon over the body of Moses. The angel argued that the body belonged to him, as Moses had earned the privilege of seeing the face of God and speaking with Him face to face. Consequently, it is even more fitting for demons to refrain from the bodies of the deceased. The ancient fathers established a custom of periodically sprinkling their graves with purifying water, believed to ward off the ruler of these bodies (for the Cabalists refer to the devil by this name).

Whenever they assume bodies, they do so through their unique power, much like angels. They have the ability to effortlessly transport themselves to

different places from where they took on their forms because matter, by its very nature, is movable and can undergo such instantaneous shifts, as permitted. Cloaked in these deceptive guises, they often inhabit desolate areas or specific houses, particularly those infamous for past evil deeds. In these locales, they aim to instill fear in people on every occasion. As a result, terrifying apparitions, chilling voices, and mournful cries are frequently heard, especially at night and during specific hours, causing considerable terror among individuals.

One such horrifying apparition manifested itself to the philosopher Arbenodotus in Athens. It had a menacing presence and emitted a terrifying shriek. It carried out rituals as though it were honoring certain departed spirits, as if following the superstitious customs of pagan peoples. It insisted on persisting in this practice, deeming it sacred and religious, and then vanished after the bones were interred. Therefore, there is a valid reason for continually purifying such places frequented by demons through devout prayers and consecrated water. This is a tradition passed down from our ancestors, one we should uphold both in our beliefs and our way of life. The closer the holy teachers were to the time of Christ, the true source of all goodness, the more they are rightfully regarded as having possessed a greater portion of divine wisdom's light than others.

Furthermore, given that such demons do not all possess equal power, as previously mentioned, and although they all share an inclination for nothing but destruction, their evil deeds vary in magnitude. The more wicked they are, based on the malevolence they have committed, the more fervently they pursue us with their malicious intent, causing greater harm in accordance with their strength. Consequently, some of them wander among humans, causing harm only through illusions and tricks. They are not particularly malevolent, and people encounter them with laughter and amusement. Many of these beings are observed in the mountains of Norway and the forests of Norland, where numerous mountains emit peculiar flames. Oftentimes, eerie howls and cries emanate from beneath the ice, leading many to speculate that the entrance to or exit from the underworld is nearby.

These spirits, imitating the custom of friendly greetings, suddenly vanish,

frustrating those who attempt to greet them. Some refer to them as "bos," and they are believed to dread punishment, except for harm or, at the very least, future retribution. They also appear when simulating the souls of the deceased. It is said that they disappear by returning to Mount Hechlam, which continually emits flames akin to Mount Etna. However, those who seem unwarlike and of the lowest rank among the spirits falsely perceive themselves as angels born from the pollution of humans, much like the Talmudists' belief in the existence of incubi. They manifest in diminutive forms, resembling dwarfs, and emit a faint light due to their existence. In their own perception, they are akin to stars. Due to the scarcity of the air they inhabit, they are exceedingly cold. Many have experienced this in their dreams, and I, too, encountered them four years ago in Naples. As I lay in bed just before dawn, I was suddenly overcome by this apparition, and I extended my hand to touch it, expecting it to be as cold as ice. To my surprise, it felt even colder than I had anticipated.

The Greeks refer to these spirits as "ephialtes," as if they were horsemen riding on top of people. In Latin, they are called "incubi," derived from "incumbere," because they press down on sleeping individuals with such force that they cannot move, let alone call for help. In the Tuscan dialect, they are often called "folletos," either due to their susceptibility to delirium or because they engage in other deceptions.

Physicians attribute the cause of this affliction to their own expertise. They claim that it arises from a denser phlegm or melancholy, not located in the brain, but adhering around the heart. When this substance swells due to excessive eating or indigestion, it presses against the diaphragm and lungs, and the thick vapor rises from there to the throat and brain. As a result, the voice is stifled, the senses and mind become disturbed, and gloomy visions flood one's sight. Most physicians do not attribute the phenomenon of incubi to this cause, and instead, they often ascribe it to illusions. This is evident when such specters trouble multiple individuals simultaneously in spacious and roomy dwellings. If, as is commonly stated, they haunt a place rather than specific individuals, they may indicate some evil that has already been committed or is about to be committed there.

There are also others who have a peculiar trait in that they excel in appearing as something great, such as sanctity, religiosity, and all kinds of goodness, rather than evil. Despite this deception, their true nature is extremely wicked, as they simulate virtues while concealing their frauds. In ancient times, they were called "lares" because they often frequented large halls. Ancient societies, deceived by these beings, did not hesitate to use various rituals and sacrifices to try to gain their favor, employing the art of Zoroaster to do so. In this highly Christian era, it is crucial that the unsuspecting public does not fall into the belief that these spirits, by insinuating themselves through a certain familiarity with deceased friends, are the souls themselves, when in fact they are deceiving. However, they rarely depart without causing some great harm, as will be explained below. This aligns with their nature, as they consistently inflict more harm in their departure than they promise on their initial appearance.

While they excel in cunningly deceiving those afflicted by sorrow, pretending to be the cause of their distress, when they depart, they often leave nothing but sorrow, grief, and even traces of extreme despair behind. In contrast, good angels bring comfort to everyone they encounter from the outset. I don't deny that, at times, these spirits may genuinely be souls, appearing by divine permission either as shadows of their own bodies or in any form they wish, yet our help and assistance are necessary for them to do so.

An example of this can be found among the Gauls, where the soul of a certain William Coru frequently appeared to his grieving and wailing widow. It was finally compelled to respond by exorcisms performed by Reverend Brother Jean Gobo, who sought to understand why it appeared, what it required, and why it afflicted her in this manner. The soul provided many responses, and after some requests were granted, it ceased to appear. Something similar is said to have occurred among the Apulians, as testified by Bartholomew Sibylla, who claimed that a soul, due to its sins committed there, endured prolonged suffering. However, since demons often appear in the guise of souls, less credence should be given to those who make such claims. Therefore, one should proceed with caution, using protests and abjurations to ascertain whether they are benevolent spirits or not, until the truth is revealed. Using this method, Satan once deceived a girl from Cassano, appearing in the

form of Saint Francis. When the deception was discovered, and he no longer obeyed her, she suffered such torment that she astonished all the inhabitants.

These spirits were often referred to as "larvae" and "lemures" in ancient times, and they frequently confronted travelers with great disturbances. Apollonius of Tyana encountered one of them in India while traveling with his disciple Damis. Upon hearing the spirit's whistling and howling around huge rocks and deep valleys (having been warned beforehand by Damis about what to expect), Apollonius used a combination of shouts, threats, and counterattacks, as if outsmarting the spirit with his own art, and managed to expel and drive away his companion. It is believed that this was done with the assistance of superior demons with whom he had a close connection, and with their help, he accomplished many other feats that surpassed human abilities.

It was observed that these spirits do not flee from threats and shouts as timid creatures, as the Platonists imagine, but rather, this punishment is inflicted on them due to their wickedness. Those who worship the idols of Lapony and Sina, believing that certain demons guard them from the rest of the spirits, more often resort to shouts and even beat them with rods if they have not adequately fulfilled their duty in guarding them. When their prayers and promises do not yield the desired results, they assault and maltreat the idols. Some have imitated this diabolical act of barbarians in our times, committing an execrable crime by foolishly throwing the relics of the Saints, and even the image of the Holiest of Holies, into rivers, without any regard for their sanctity. They intentionally left the image under the open sky at night so that it would get wet, hoping to attract dew, and then they gave it to a mandrake to eat or offered it to an ass. If humans, in their depravity, ate it, they would blaspheme horribly. This vile act, sometimes even committed by Christians, is often a result of the ignorance of certain pastors or the vain pursuits of philosophy, empty studies of poets, indulgence in feasts and carousing, and, unfortunately, the excessive greed of some. In this scenario, they are like sheep left to the wolves while the shepherds either weep or are occupied elsewhere, leaving them exposed and vulnerable to the cunning of demons.

What the devout should seek from God through fervent prayers, fasting,

almsgiving, and sincere penance is being forcefully extorted through such nefarious abuse of relics and superstition, a practice no less horrendous than heathen customs. Not even the example of Moses, who sweetened bitter waters by throwing wood into them, can support this behavior. It is clear that this act was meant to be symbolic, reflecting his intention. Our true and living deity, not following mere appearances but looking to the mind, is not moved by threats. Rather, it is known that He responds to pious prayers, which the symbol represented. Our true and living deity is usually inclined to be moved by the prayers of the devout, especially when faced with the obstinacy of the defiant.

Furthermore, there exist certain demons, more malevolent and driven by an unrelenting desire to inflict harm, who assail passersby from a distance, subjecting them to horrifying afflictions and torment. They are akin to those mentioned in the Gospel, who caused great harm to the Gerasenes, and to the ones recorded in ancient Gentile histories, who brought numerous calamities upon the renowned people of Téspis on the shores of Britain. Their actions were so severe that they struck down a considerable number of individuals, as if they had transgressed the laws of hospitality.

Indeed, in certain places, events of great astonishment have unfolded, where the power of demons to commit grievous offenses is amplified. God allows these occurrences so that people may learn from them and be deterred from engaging in such abominable acts. The concept of Tartarus, which represents the punishment for sins, is not merely a superstition, as it is believed to exist in some regions. From these grievous transgressions, they may gain insight and desist.

On the other hand, some demons are so steeped in falsehood that they incline towards speaking lies without any apparent reason. These deceitful spirits are not to be admired. In their presence, they wield their influence over those who are sinful, as if these individuals were their puppets, as depicted in the Old Testament. For instance, we read of deceiving spirits sent to lead the Egyptians astray and spirits sent to exact vengeance upon King Ahab of Israel through the mouths of false prophets. There are also accounts of spirits sowing enmity between Abimelech and the men of Shechem. Furthermore,

the very places inhabited by these demons can contaminate and corrupt people through contact, much like the Harpies in the Aeneid polluted and agitated the Stymphalian birds, transforming anyone who passed by into a raving lunatic. A similar occurrence took place not too long ago in Rome, within an orphanage where, in a single night, over fifty girls became possessed by demons.

There are also others, both among brute animals and humans, who, when afflicted and possessed by a melancholic disposition, which they often consider a suitable instrument for such disgraceful and wretched purposes, become accustomed to using it in this vile and miserable manner. As a result, during their periods of rest, they encounter terrifying and sorrowful visions. When they are awake, they are haunted by impure thoughts, excessive anxieties, obscene words, and wicked deeds that frequently burst forth. Thus, these bodies become the abode of demons, meant to be temples of God. However, these demons not only invade the blood of animals but also infiltrate the dwelling place of souls and the spirits formed from bodies, as if they sense some form of solace there, as though it were corporeal, due to the vital warmth it offers.

This perspective was held by certain Platonists and particularly by Psellus, even though these demons are genuinely incorporeal and have no real connection to our bodies. Rather, it appears that by inhabiting humans, they somehow experience a kind of rejuvenation through the possession of bodies. In doing so, they inflict more harm and severe punishment upon us, asserting this power over us as if it were their right. They do this in response to Adam's transgression and our daily sins. Consequently, they defile the flesh, reject the Lord, curse the divine majesty, corrupt the spirits of the brain, distort actions, and ultimately alter the bodies to such an extent that they can be easily distinguished from others by their contorted eyes and rigidity.

By occupying human bodies in this manner, they lay claim to corporeal substance and do not enter through a fall, as they otherwise would through shadowy contact. They can never fail to engage in perverse actions, if not at their own will, certainly within their capacity.

When they possess someone, they not only inflict the previously mentioned harms but also go further. However, they do not torment their victims continuously, as this would ultimately lead to their total destruction. Instead, they employ intermittent torment, disturbing their victims' thoughts and depriving them of their senses. To achieve this, they often employ a deceptive tactic: they pretend to be the souls of notable individuals who were executed for some extraordinary crime. This deceit has led some Pythagorean philosophers and Persian magi to embrace the belief in the transmigration of souls.

Pythagoras himself, the preeminent philosopher of his time in Italy, openly advocated this belief and preferred to be known as a philosopher rather than a wise man. He instructed his disciples to take an oath by the Tetractys and to maintain silence, understanding the name of God through this utterance. Through this oath, he aimed to extract from his disciples the true God, influenced by the instigation of demons. Apollonius of Tyana also accepted the doctrine of transmigration of souls, known as "VETO Jvxúv." In his quest for wisdom, he engaged with the Gymnosophists and Brahmans, just as Democritus, Plato, the Egyptians, the Chaldeans, and others had done. He persuaded them by presenting a lion that he claimed was possessed by these spirits, encouraging them to believe that Amasis contained the soul of a deceased person.

He hoped that by promoting this belief, it would prevent women from being deceived during his time. These women, believing firmly that they could perceive the spirits of certain deceased individuals, thought they could uncover the secrets of those whom they represented. They also believed they could reveal the mysteries of those who had committed murders and sought various apparent benefits. They held steadfast to this notion, convinced of the existence of the souls they referred to.

It can never be the case that these souls truly exist, and they hold no power to oppress anyone after departing from the body. According to theologians, once the soul leaves the body, it faces the immediate scrutiny of Michael and the left-hand demon of weighing. This scrutiny may result in eternal torment if the soul is found wanting or placement by the right-hand side with an angel

to endure temporary suffering. Alternatively, the soul may ascend according to its inherent nature, contemplating God throughout eternity.

It's important to note that, apart from the animating force within the body, no other entity possesses the power to move the body with greater strength. The soul and the form cannot coexist simultaneously in one body, as one serves as the motivator while the other embodies the form. Therefore, whether they seek hidden secrets or pursue some form of good, it remains irrelevant. The nature of wickedness is such that demons are well-acquainted with it and often disguise themselves as something else.

Hence, the work of these deceptive spirits, especially those permitted to remain among us by the will of God, is aimed at preventing idleness and instead encouraging continuous debate with them. The ultimate goal is to achieve joyful victory and, with greater merit, attain eternal life. Indeed, these spirits, when entering even animals, rarely fail to commit great evils, evident in the example of the swine in the Gospel, who, before being granted such power, were driven headlong into the nearby sea by the Lord.

They sometimes inflict great harm, including death itself, upon humans, as evident from their actions documented in texts like the Malleus Maleficarum and Etor. One notable incident involves Krfos, who subjected the prophet Elisha to various indignities and humiliations. They even tore apart the children who mocked him and unleashed lions upon the Samaritans who did not worship the God of heaven according to their customary practices.

Moreover, there's another account of a ferocious lion refraining from attacking a righteous man who failed to fulfill God's commandments as expected. This lion only left when the man noticed it looking at him.

Lastly, in an eerie occurrence, they took the form of wolves near Vienna, which was always considered an ominous sign in ancient times. This led to the deaths and consumption of many humans, prompting Bishop Mamerco to establish supplications to appease God and prevent impending disasters.

Similar events transpired in various locations, involving spirits inhabiting

livestock, which served as instruments of demons and led to the shedding of human blood. Consequently, all those involved, including the ancient serpent, faced retribution through God's righteous judgment.

Moreover, the spirits of apostates persist in committing similar, and even more heinous, atrocities day by day. They would be restrained by divine power and the strength of the angels if it weren't for certain possessed individuals, known in Greek as "energumenos." These individuals' bodies are used in a malevolent and disgraceful manner to harm others. However, it's essential to note that not all spirits are equally troublesome and malevolent, as mentioned earlier. They exploit the sins of the possessed, which vary greatly in severity. Furthermore, the evil and power of the demons inhabiting these individuals vary. In accordance with God's equitable judgment, some demons are allowed to cause more harm to one person than another, depending on the nature of their transgressions. This is why, in this life, some people may not appear afflicted and instead seem to enjoy tranquility and happiness, even though in the afterlife, they will face perpetual and eternal punishment.

These demoniacs, at times so violently agitated by the fury of the possessing spirits, are so disturbed that one person, even if robust, can hardly avoid causing harm to others when surrounded by three or four such individuals. These spirits can render others trembling with fear, inflating the limbs of some at their will and instructing them to spew forth curses randomly.

I have personally witnessed a possessed woman who was so audacious that she couldn't look at anyone without openly hurling hidden insults and various ignominies, which could have led to undesirable consequences. Consequently, strong suspicion grew, and only those who had already confessed dared to approach her. Those who had recently confessed and were members of the clergy were the only ones safe from her influence. This illustrates that sins, which heretics unjustly denigrate as mere Sacraments, are indeed hidden and concealed from demons. Observing this, the royal Prophet, inspired by the divine spirit, exclaims with great emotion, "Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered."

In this manner, they inflict great suffering on those who are possessed, rendering them mute, as is evident from the Gospel, where we read of the mute demon being cast out. They also bind their tongues and blind their eyes, preventing them from offering proper praises to God, seeing sacred objects, immersing themselves in holy water, or anointing their hands. They keep the rest of their faculties captive. I personally witnessed this in a woman from Macherata in the year 1579, in Confluentes, a town in Calabria. I had traveled there with a sincere desire to witness the miracles attributed to the Blessed Virgin, who was believed to be without any stain. During my three-day stay, I cannot emphasize enough the miracles I witnessed. A hernia sufferer was healed, a person afflicted with a long-standing ailment was restored to health, and another suffering from gout was cured. I saw a mute person regain their speech, paralyzed individuals stand up, and many lame individuals regain their mobility. I plan to discuss these remarkable events in greater detail at another time, as it would be more appropriate.

Returning to my original point, it's worth noting that multiple spirits of this kind can inhabit the same possessed individual, engaging in various forms of malevolence. This is why the term "legion" was used to describe the multitude of demons within the possessed man. On the other hand, they deceive some vulnerable elderly women and gullible children, convincing them that on specific nights and under certain conditions, souls depart from their bodies to join the deceased. This delusion arises solely from the demons' deceptive influence, which corrupts their minds through their unbelief.

Some women from among the credulous common folk embrace these beliefs and make predictions about certain individuals' deaths. Occasionally, these predictions come true by chance. However, it is challenging to overstate the extent of the web of errors woven by this baseless and erroneous belief, which demons themselves promote through deceit. Some even claim that these are their own souls, a notion that cannot be realistically or truthfully asserted. It all stems from the demons' deceptions that warp their imaginations. Regrettably, this error has also infiltrated the minds of individuals who are not part of the common folk.

Many years ago, a similar occurrence took place in Fossombrone, where

some people fell prey to the passions and illusions wrought by demons. Among them, a certain individual named Master Antonio from Carolei, renowned for his truthfulness and uprightness, was so ensnared by this condition that he often spoke truths rather than falsehoods, especially concerning certain individuals near death. A Reverend Priest, Giovanni Antonio Anania, a virtuous and diligent man, recognized the situation and tried to persuade this unfortunate man, plagued by a misguided belief, to distance himself from it. He emphasized that these were not the souls of the deceased but rather demons. By believing in these deceitful spirits, he gravely sinned against God.

Therefore, with the salvation of God and his own soul at stake, he implored his friend. He asked that, in anticipation of the future attacks by these demons (for he foresaw them coming), or when they would begin to torment him, he should no longer yield to their influence. He solemnly professed that he should fervently pray to God, making fervent vows to be released from this diabolical illusion and the web of deceit. The man, deeply moved by these desperate pleas, believed and solemnly promised to do his utmost to comply. He received from the respected clergyman a particular wax and a consecrated image known as the "Lamb of God" with a cheerful heart, then returned home.

When the usual day, on which he had previously been plagued by these illusions, arrived, and he wasn't seized by them, he gave thanks to God with boundless joy for this blessing. However, on another day and at an unexpected hour following this, as not all days of the week were the same, but rather, due to a greater contempt for God and their own shame, these demon tricks happened to assault him on Tuesday and Thursday, he once again confronted his recurring affliction by these unclean spirits. Recognizing the signs and filled with deep sadness and sorrow, he cried out vehemently. He confessed that he had never intended to align with these rebellious and impious spirits. Almost all of his household members, who were not few in number, rushed to his side upon hearing his cries, as they were well aware of the situation. He narrated the incident systematically and, with many words, explained that he had been entirely delivered from it. He gave the utmost gratitude to God.

Upon understanding this, I myself, eager to investigate such matters firsthand, frequented a certain simple and gullible man who, as common rumor had it, had been afflicted by this delusion. From him, I gathered information, some of which, however, did not coincide with the events as he had initially described them, despite having shared many other true occurrences. Later, when we happened to meet, I asked him, "Have you recently reached out to me, or have you been deceived by the devil?" "Certainly not," he replied. "For their reckoning of time differs from ours. Their days, weeks, months, and years are often longer than what we calculate."

What more can I say? I came to learn many peculiar beliefs about Angelic time, which I found to be nothing but sheer nonsense. It left me greatly astonished to realize that this poor man had no understanding of the distinctions between lupines, as they are commonly known.

Similarly, among the Lappians, most of whom still practice fire worship and believe that, by using magical incantations and specific strikes, even with the aid of creatures like frogs or snakes, they can glimpse hidden truths from those they seek information from. They sadly believe that when these creatures lie lifeless, their wandering souls emerge, akin to the raven of Armoncrates of Clazomenae. They think these souls wander out of their bodies, leading to numerous tales and the attribution of desired signs. However, all these notions stem from the deceptive tricks played by demons who manipulate their imaginations.

Likewise, among the Cumans, inhabitants of the New World, who fall under the sway of the Occulta, the name they use for demons in their secret language, known by the Spaniards and their priests as "Piaches." These people engage in elaborate acts of atonement, convincing themselves of their necessity.

BOOK IV

Malevolent spirits, driven by their intense malice and a relentless desire to inflict harm, seem to roam incessantly, devouring anyone they encounter, much like ravenous lions. These entities not only incite individuals to oppress others but also relentlessly endeavor to thwart the eternal purpose of the Almighty God whenever possible. They even manipulate the very elements themselves, imbuing these otherwise sluggish and inert forces with power, establishing a dwelling for their malevolence, thus abusing the divine power granted to them. Through these elements, they diligently and not infrequently succeed in securing divine honors and worship from various nations.

By showcasing astonishing prodigies derived from these elements, these malevolent spirits manage to deceive the nations that are far removed from the knowledge of the true God. As a result, people, beguiled by these displays, create a multitude of gods and deities, each aligned with the distinct regions from which these prodigies originate. Consequently, these spirits are attributed with various titles, such as celestial gods, ethereal beings, heroes, marine entities, terrestrial spirits, fountain spirits, river spirits, Dryads, Hamadryads, Nymphs, Oreads, and even the semblance of young girls, a concept notably absent from the Old Testament due to its imperfection. For this reason, they are also excluded from the priesthood.

In contrast, they are represented as angels, akin to the New Testament's belief that the Virgin Mary, endowed with the highest grace, possesses a womanly form, distinguished not by her nature, but her exceptional tenderness. In a further attempt to deceive and mislead, these malevolent entities adopt the guise of gods and goddesses, mirroring the tales spun by poets, particularly concerning the mythical six hundred heavenly brides.

Moreover, these cunning spirits, often assuming the guise of Nymphs, particularly among the Biorni and Finns, occasionally intercede on behalf of humans. Much like household spirits, they shield people from various

misfortunes, to which we are all vulnerable, as illustrated in the account by Saxo Grammaticus. He recounts the story of a certain Fronto who, thanks to these spirits, remained impervious to any weapon or iron.

These spirits are known by various names, including Celecti, Penates, Lares, Indigetes, Semidei, Sumani, Cabiri, Curetes, Coribantes, Telchines, Anthidei, Patellarii, Medioxumi, Anculi, and in the language of the Dryopes, Pappi. In earlier times, these deceitful angels were summoned to Rome or manifested through statues, as is said to have occurred in Veii. It was believed that divine light shone forth the moment Adam departed, and, in accordance with the signs revealed by the angels and foretold by the prophets, all darkness dissipated, illuminating the entire world due to the victory achieved by Paul and Peter, the two beacons of the world, through their own sacrifice.

From this point, all the sacred doctrines of religion extended to places where darkness was most profound, and the radiance of this light would undoubtedly break through, though it could not be openly unveiled due to the fear of tyrants, until the emergence of the son of iniquity, who would bring his mysterious malevolence to the world.

Continuing with the rest: Among these spirits, a significant number of them operate under the cloak of night, taking residence in concealed chambers and in locations described as damp, which is said to be the reason why our Savior, Jesus, the Savior of the world, declined to drink vinegar offered to Him on a reed. Others frequently involve themselves in violent storms and thunderstorms, as they orchestrate their mischief, delivering powerful lightning strikes. To ensure that their strikes are precise and not sporadic, as they originate from the natural movement of the stars, they aim directly. Consequently, they strike down and often kill even those in the deepest valleys, let alone on the summits of the highest mountains. Survivors of these strikes were recorded in ancient times, and this was the result of God's remarkable providence and the cunning of the demons, as will be explained further.

Moreover, when great calamities loom, these spirits tend to exhibit various prodigies, as if reveling in these misfortunes. This occurred not too many

years ago among the Germans, where they had a custom of dyeing their garments with various crosses, as the fabric of their clothing allowed, almost as if using blood-red hues, every morning throughout an entire month. Among the Insubres, before the Gauls were expelled from Italy, it is said that large stones even rained down, as also occurred nearly thirty years ago near Sinola in the New World. The Spaniards often recount terrifying impacts from warlike weapons attributed to these spirits. In the year in which I write this, the phenomenon has been widely attributed to a volcano, but this is a false attribution, as it appears to me. It is quite evident that these sounds occur much more frequently, heard from all directions, whether near or far, and with much greater regularity than volcano eruptions, as they resonate in various locations.

The illusions created by demons in the air, which we will discuss in more detail elsewhere, have been ascribed to various authors. There are also historical accounts of celestial armies, like the one witnessed in the sky during the time of the Maccabees in Jerusalem, and prior to the siege led by Titus. A similar event occurred around fifty years ago among the Cimbri, specifically at Sleufuici, and in Apulia before the arrival of Charles VIII. Another instance took place among the Sarmatians in Cracow, where a certain monk was seen in a competitive act with the king, ultimately yielding. More recently, a similar phenomenon was observed in Mexico shortly before its conquest. About five years ago, for nearly six months leading up to the siege of Thama in Turkey, a similar phenomenon transpired. The city was previously known as Nicopolis, as hinted at by poets in their tales of various battles and divine struggles during the fall of Troy. In the past, during the Cimbric wars, historians noted that the clashing of arms and the neighing of horses foretold civil wars, and even the lowing of an ox was seen as an omen.

There are also accounts of spirits producing sounds resembling drums among merchants sailing to Cathay. Such occurrences are frequently reported in Lopus, an exceptionally desolate region, now known as a particular passage of Imaus. Some claim to hear these same spirits playing trumpets in specific Arabian deserts. A credible writer, Marcus Venetus, attests that near the deserts of Carmania and Chorasmia beyond the province of the Caucasus, darkness is so thick that it appears to be night at noon. It is not entirely

surprising that these spirits often manifest in remote and desolate aerial locations. Some of these spirits have been bound by the intervention of angels, preventing them from causing harm during certain times, much like the angel Raphael bound the demon afflicting Sara in upper Egypt, as holy scripture attests.

These spirits are also inclined to manifest other extraordinary phenomena in the atmosphere, such as torches, lamps, beams, fireballs, and chasms. At times, they even create the illusion that stars and even the moon itself are plummeting from the sky through deceptive tricks, as we encounter in the writings of poets regarding the exploits of Thessalian sorcerers. Similar accounts are found in Arabian fables about the acts of Mohammed, a notably nefarious magician, making the moon a symbol of their sect. They have portrayed all these occurrences as illusions and phantasms to the public eye, leading common folk to believe that they have witnessed these events, despite being more fantastical than what supposedly took place at Saqqara, as the saying goes.

In this context, ancient poets did not shy away from their craft, describing how incantations could bring down the moon from the heavens, and the moon, in its struggle, tries to descend, with attempts even to lure it down through song, only to be thwarted by altars. The stark contrast between this narrative and reality lies in the fact that, no matter their efforts, demons can never disrupt the natural order. Not to mention that the moon, due to its celestial nature, could never fall, for the heavens, of which it is a part, possess neither weight nor mass. Were it to descend upon the Earth, it would disrupt the exquisite harmony of the universe, which serves no purpose for any creature. Only God, the author and creator of all nature, possesses the power to alter it at His will. This is why, though malevolent spirits may transgress natural boundaries, they cannot truly alter or destroy them. Hence, Satan's attempt to test whether Jesus, the true Son of God, could transform stones into bread.

Additionally, among the spirits that inhabit the watery realms, there are many that the Greeks refer to as "Pan," and the Gauls call "Dufios."

It is said that these entities often transform into incubi and succubi, and they claim that this unholy union commenced long before Noah's time, when such tales first emerged. Some even believe that this abominable intercourse predates the Great Flood. The notion is that unclean, bull-like spirits infiltrated highly lascivious and wanton women through the sons of God who consorted with the daughters of men. This was believed to occur due to the cunning machinations of demons, who, through frequent mingling with humans, formed a close association with them. Consequently, many false gods were erroneously referred to as "sons of God," even though it would be implausible for these spirits, who are more often identified as demonic, to be in such a way. However, these spirits later gained notoriety for certain prodigious feats and, despite their crimes and atrocities, were elevated to divine status through apotheosis. People would then seek their assistance in times of need, as if they were deities.

Over time, this madness, the result of demonic influence, led to the desecration of not only mute and reptilian creatures, quadrupeds, and all terrestrial and amphibious animals, but also fruits, flowers, herbs, gems, pearls, metals, and all the like. Even the flesh of human beings, who were created in the image of God and consecrated as temples of God, was wickedly devoted to these filthy and sinful idols, resulting in their disgraceful destruction. Consequently, some truly astonishing events have occurred at times, with God's permission. Through these apparitions (for this is what these spirits are sometimes called when they appear in the form of phantasms or corporeal likenesses), women have been widely seduced, and even boys, committing a horrendous crime that not even most of them have committed due to their natural excellence. They were sometimes deceived to the extent of believing many implausible things, such as the notion that from this unholy union between spirits and humans, heroes were born as if from two different species, akin to mules. It's important to note that spirits cannot emit anything from themselves into women, as some Platonists falsely imagine, but they unite in such a way that this wicked union has led nations astray from the righteous path.

This detestable and most shameful union continues to this day, with demons

deceiving the nations. Some lament the loss of certain females and even some human beings, who indeed are lamentable victims. It is a grave departure from rationality for human beings, who are obligated by Christ through baptism or oath, to enslave themselves to such an extent through the temptations of these infernal furies that their souls are exposed to extreme peril, facing eternal damnation due to the causes of these demonic seductions.

To deceive these unfortunate women with their cunning ruses, demons enlist particular women inflamed with intense desire. These women, ensnared by the deceptive allure of these demons, are known among the learned as lamias. They earn this appellation either due to their likeness to a certain monster or because they bear the countenance of a young girl. The rest, whether they are creatures of the beastly kind or a certain species of demon, feed upon the blood of children. Poets have made observations regarding this as well. Hence, Horace says, "Lest a living child be drawn from their swollen bellies. Ah, those who are inflamed with the fiercer flames of desire, even more so than if they were united with the most vigorous youth, burn, although without the release of seed".

Nevertheless, it has been confessed that in some instances of this wicked union, when discovered, it was obtained through a particular art or extorted from men, for these demons employ individuals of both genders. However, even if they cannot direct this semen when it is necessary for the formation of nerves, veins, arteries, and bones, in which God has the least involvement, under a certain disposition of nature and direct influence from heaven, it cannot be denied that some are begotten, and the majority of those born are born from it. While these individuals are not genuinely propagated from spirits, they have nevertheless acquired a knowledge of their deceitful tricks. They claim that Aeneas was born from Venus and Anchises, Bacchus from Jupiter and Semele, Romulus from Mars, and many other ancient heroes. They include six hundred individuals who, they say, were conceived in a similar manner. For example, Alexander the Great is said to have been conceived from a snake, as were the priests of Ammon. Even Emperor Nero, some believe, was conceived from a dragon. This belief is akin to the British annals, which narrate tales of Merlin, and the Japanese myths about their own Xaca. Many such figures have been the authors of idolatry and heresy,

including Luther, the arch-heretic, and Mohammed.

Hence, it occurs, as a consequence of God's wondrous judgment and providence, that when these individuals are born, not only are the customary good and joyous events, typical of the birthdays of God's saints, absent, but instead, a myriad of unfortunate and horrendous evils, accompanied by prodigies, come to pass. These individuals are all the more feared and dreaded because their lives and deeds are more pestilential, and people must guard themselves against them as if they were the most venomous spiritual poison.

In this unholy union, demons sometimes coercively engage with unwilling and unfortunate women. However, they derive particular satisfaction from women who harbor impure thoughts and openly express them through various outward actions. These women intricately style their hair and exert great effort in adorning themselves with gemstones, pearls, applying makeup to their faces, and altering the shape of their eyebrows, constantly changing their appearance. As a result, it is not without reason that women are instructed to enter temples with their heads covered, as they often captivate and tempt others more when they present themselves in a highly adorned and deceptive manner. Hence, these repugnant and terrifying specters of demons should incur punishment upon themselves.

It is not surprising that divine wisdom takes great offense at this transgression, where faces, crafted with divine artistry, are disgracefully defiled. Furthermore, along with their insatiable lust, demons, in collaboration with some young men and exceptionally beautiful maidens, often engage in immoral activities, as is known to be customary, just as it is documented in the history of Scotland that a few years ago, a young woman of noble birth, renowned for her beauty, vehemently opposed marriage and was discovered to be with child. When her parents inquired diligently about the identity of the person responsible for this scandal, the young woman herself boldly admitted to engaging in sexual activity, both day and night, with an unidentified young man, not knowing anything about his origins or identity.

The parents were filled with profound distress, anguish, and turmoil when a servant informed them that a certain man was in their daughter's room. Without delay, they hurried to the scene, carrying torches since it was nighttime. After unlocking the sealed doors, they were confronted with a horrifying and unimaginable sight that defied all human belief, particularly chilling as they saw the man separating from their daughter, emitting foul odors. They urgently summoned a virtuous priest, known for his upright character, who, while reciting the Gospel of Saint John, uttered the words, "The Word became flesh." Instantly, a colossal and terrifying demon materialized with a deafening roar, instilling immense terror, and then vanished, leaving the room's ceiling exposed (as was its custom). Regrettably, three days later, this unfortunate woman gave birth to an equally monstrous offspring. To prevent it from being raised within the family, they constructed a pyre and cremated it, following tradition.

A similar incident is recounted in Garothea, where a succubus, assuming the guise of a stunningly beautiful young girl, approached an adolescent boy, seeking to ensnare him with her embraces. Upon receiving reliable information about this matter, the local bishop earnestly advised the young man to lead a Christian life through prayer, fasting, and repentance, and to change his place of residence. By obediently following these instructions, the young man was liberated from the sinister advances of that apparition.

It holds a particular significance, and it involves a change of name due to a concealed property associated with the angels, believed to be more effectively influenced. We can observe this from the examples of Abraham and Sarah, as well as Isaac, who, according to the Kabbalists, altered his name to Isaac to progress further in goodness, especially in the southern region, where he knew an angel favored him. A similar instance is said to have occurred not more than twenty years ago involving a certain philosopher in Corinth, Apollonius of Tyana. I have refrained from mentioning his name, as contemporary examples are often met with objections.

Regarding these impure encounters, demons always have their bodies concealed and veiled in a corporeal form, following their usual practice.

A similar account is relayed from Fortea, a Scottish estuary, where a specific ship, sailing nearby, was abruptly besieged by storms, waves, and heavy downpours. The ship was so battered that it seemed beyond rescue, with torn sails and a broken mast. It was during this turmoil that a sailor, in astonishment and great fear, cried out that the devil was behind these calamities. Immediately, a woman's voice, filled with terror, came from the bilge, identifying herself as the cause of this dire situation. She explained that, due to her nefarious actions, akin to what is described in sacred texts, she had been immobilized by the devil. Begging them to remove this cursed burden from the ship and cast her into the sea, she described her plight, emphasizing her long unwillingness to come forward. On the same ship, a priest encouraged the woman not to lose hope in God's boundless mercy toward repentant sinners. He spoke earnestly, elaborating on God's benevolence and compassion, how God includes all under sin in order to show mercy to all. Therefore, he persuaded her to turn to God with genuine remorse in her heart and soul, accompanied by sincere sighs and penance for her transgressions, and to return to the path of righteousness.

The woman complied, fully aware that God's mercy should extend not only to herself but also to the sailors. She wept and prayed ceaselessly. Suddenly, a small cloud emerged from the ship, radiating with flames and sulfur, revealing the demon. I also have knowledge of another young lady who was repeatedly tormented in secret by an incubus. Eventually, weary of her suffering, she decided to confide the entire ordeal in her friends. With God's assistance and a change of location and name, she too found liberation from this affliction.

There should be no doubt about the truth of what has been mentioned, even though these occurrences may appear incredible. Unfortunately, daily experience teaches us about a multitude of more severe and frequent cases involving incubi and succubi. We read that this reprehensible act is often committed by both men and women and is commonly referred to as the "game of Diana and Herodias." During the dead of night, these unfortunate women, who have cruelly killed the infants born from such unions, use the infants' fat as ointments. With these ointments, they embark on journeys to distant places, aided by a twig or branch crafted from birch trees. This twig is

coated with an ointment, often made from the fat of these infants, which they believe aids in achieving their desired goals. They imagine that the devil takes on the form of this twig or impresses this image upon their corrupt imagination. They are then transported through various intervals between locations, as if carried by a whirlwind, until they ultimately reach Satan himself. They envision him as a supreme authority seated on a lofty throne, masquerading as the chief and leader of all the wretched. They prostrate themselves with bent knees before him in the most pitiful manner, though they do not face him but turn their backs to him, bending their heads not toward their chest but to their shoulders. This is done to ensure that the lords, who are distinct from others, do not see their faces, following a different law from ours. They proceed to sing songs and perform dances, unlike any in our customs, according to their own traditions. The women, with men behind them, move backward, arching their backs and tilting their heads backward, rather than towards their chest, lifting their feet with such agility that they appear to be performing an extraordinarily skilled dance, surpassing human capabilities. In this manner, while dancing and indulging their desires, both men and women partake in lavish and sumptuous feasts, as men do not abstain from these vile spectacles. They indulge their libidinous desires to such an extent that often certain women, who have chosen to abstain from Venus's pleasures, experience pleasure simultaneously from dual-membered men.

Undoubtedly, this detestable and abhorrent crime stands out above all others, and it hasn't been limited to a specific time or age, as many claim. In fact, it has become increasingly prevalent in this final era of the world. Unless strict laws and regulations are established to combat it with unyielding determination, this sin will continue to spread unchecked. However, it's worth noting that not everyone believes that this diabolical phenomenon is real. Some attribute it to mere fantastical imaginations or the influence of demons brought about by skepticism, and some even profess to have witnessed it in their dreams. It's not entirely surprising that there are such skeptics. It's possible that they may be misled by these entities since demons are highly skilled in deception and can conjure elaborate illusions.

What reason would they have to vehemently deny it, as if demons, through

their own power, couldn't move the bodies of stubborn individuals, especially those who desire such a thing? After all, angels, with their inherent power, have performed such feats. For instance, one angel transported the prophet Habakkuk from Judea to Chaldea by his hair, and another carried Ezekiel from the land of the Chaldeans to the Promised Land. The Scriptures also recount how Philip was transported from Azotus to the presence of the Queen of Candace, in keeping with Ethiopian customs. If angels can accomplish such feats through their inherent power, there's no reason to doubt that demons could do the same through the same means, particularly since they are frequently summoned and encouraged to engage in these detestable deeds through superstitious and highly ritualistic practices, which they relish.

Thus, there are accounts of individuals like Empedocles being transported from Agrigento to Croton by the same spirits, and Pythagoras from the Tauric Chersonesus to Hyperborea. Philostratus attests that Apollonius of Tyana was carried from Rome to Dicaearchia in a mere eight hours. He also mentions that Simon Magus was elevated into the air, an event witnessed by Peter, as recorded in Clement's records. In certain northern histories, it's claimed that Zenobius of Norway was transported to the Arctic region by a demon, and without any criminal activity involved, some reports assert that Bishop Hillidius of Dissentis was conveyed through the air to Rome, as well as Albertus Magnus. However, let's not dwell further on words and additional examples when even the author of our salvation, Jesus Christ Himself, after assuming our human form, was transported through various places by the tempting demon.

The truth of this matter is attested to by their gatherings. Not many years ago, a man, driven more by curiosity than superstition, ventured into the Sabine countryside to verify the claims made by his wife, who had been caught in the same sin. He sought to see for himself if what she had asserted was accurate. Guided by demons who had assumed the form of a birch rod, anointed with fat, as his wife had instructed, he arrived at the customary location for such events. He was greatly astonished by the multitude of attendees and the variety of dishes, particularly noticing the absence of salt in all the food. Alongside his wife, who had pledged allegiance to Satan, he took his place at the feast and repeatedly requested salt. When salt was finally

brought to him, he uttered the sweet name of Jesus in an admiring manner. Astonishingly, in the blink of an eye, all the guests (remarkably) and the entire feast vanished. The man who had invoked this most holy name found himself alone in profound darkness, far from his home and without his clothes, which had been left behind. Yet, through divine intervention, he was raised up and aided by angelic assistance. Even though we may not always perceive them with our eyes, angels never abandon us if we have not been forsaken by divine grace, as Elisha demonstrated to his disciple. Two days later, he returned home and advised that many people, particularly women, should, according to the more secretive theologians, secretly proceed, as it were, from the left side or from fragile vessels. He recommended that all these individuals, along with his wife, be consigned to the flames.

A similar account pertains to a witch named Lucretia, who, upon hearing the sound of a bell at dawn, renounced her demon and was discovered by a young man. Although he promised not to reveal her secret, he ultimately reported it to the authorities, leading to her punishment.

Furthermore, there is an example involving a respected priest who departed from his house, intending to go to the countryside as was his habit. Unbeknownst to him, he was whisked away by a demon-mounted horse. However, places where witches frequently gather (since not everywhere can such malevolent deeds be carried out due to the more benign influence of the heavens and the protective presence of angels over certain regions) are often marked by some infamous crime or sacrilege. This provides the fertile ground for such practices to flourish and amuse them, as they are somewhat deprived of angelic protection. These notorious places include Nux in Samnium, Beneventana, Collis in Dania Mons, and Virgo in Gothia, where it is commonly believed that all witches are transported by the efforts of demoniacs.

Hence, it is evident that those who deny these occurrences are quite mistaken. I wouldn't refute that these events might take place in the realm of imagination, as they themselves claim, given that it frequently transpires in this manner. It's beyond the power of these spirits to physically move the Sun beyond our horizon at night, causing deluded women to envision them in one

place one moment and in another through the air in the next. Nothing prevents this. Consequently, some of these occurrences indeed happen, while others remain confined to their corrupted imaginations, experienced through dreams. Nevertheless, these unfortunate women are known to assert them as if they occurred in reality, often under oath.

If I were to provide more instances of such events, there would be no shortage. However, it's essential to deeply appreciate the boundless mercy of God toward us. Even when the sign of the cross or the name of Jesus is invoked, even by wrongdoers, these diabolical deceptions are immediately disrupted and dispelled. Consequently, even those deeply entangled in these sinful customs, upon witnessing the impotence and feebleness of the devil, are more inclined to turn to God Almighty, the origin and wellspring of all goodness. They come to believe in Him and strive with all their might to regain the grace they had shamefully forsaken. For God is not the instigator of perdition but the source of all salvation and redemption, unless destruction emanates from within ourselves.

Hence, it often occurs that those who are plagued by such miseries, during the celebration of divine services, experience a sense of peace and freedom from distress, whereas at other times, they are relentlessly besieged by a multitude of thoughts and tormented by deep anxieties. These spirits also go to great lengths to incite them toward committing various wicked deeds.

In contrast, it is a rare occurrence for these spirits not to vanish upon encountering the scent of the divine rod, which they greatly fear and dread. This is undoubtedly a profound mystery, well-known to the ancient Egyptians, who incorporated this God-given symbol, containing many profound meanings, into their hieroglyphics, signifying human salvation. Subsequently, when they applied this symbol, the Hebrews, marked with blood on their doorposts as commanded by God, were spared from harm, while the firstborn of the Egyptians were struck down by an angel.

It is said among the Arabs that they used to have this divine image painted on their arms as a safeguard against specific calamities. We can also speculate that even Plato might have perceived its significance through his personal

experimentation.

But returning to the point from which I diverged, I will briefly recount certain experiences involving these same spirits, witnessed and encountered by a man of significant authority.

This man had been away on a journey related to family matters. Upon his return home, he found himself surrounded by the ominous darkness of night, at a location known among the common people as the site of a Hebrew's murder—an ill-fated place. As he passed through it, he was suddenly overcome by an intense horror, although no apparent cause was discernible by his senses. I believe this occurred because the demon was eager to test him, especially in places like these, as previously mentioned, where they possess greater influence than in others, and thus, take particular delight. They might either simulate the violent death of the slain or actually perpetrate it, or they seek to gratify their malevolent nature through the demise of wrongdoers. Furthermore, their natures and desires align closely, and they are not as restricted by angels as they once were in the fields of Marathonia, famous for the Persian slaughter. Many ancient writers attest that spirits roamed there for an extended period, unnoticed by the locals, accompanied by the clanging of weapons and the whinnying of horses, not to mention the sounds of other animals.

Even now, they claim that Haesem, as they call it, a vast region in Hibernia, is perpetually shrouded in darkness and plagued by apostates. It is said that one can hear the neighing of horses, the crowing of roosters, and the voices of other animals, as asserted by Antonius, a relatively unknown historian among the Armenians. But let's return to the story at hand. After traveling only about ten paces, a stretch where life had exposed him to danger, the man was suddenly gripped by fear. He glanced around and spotted a remarkably large mule approaching in a narrow passage. This sight filled him with intense terror, yet he managed to maintain his composure. He didn't give in to despair or abandon his journey. Instead, he summoned his strength and courage, proceeding onward.

He fortified himself by making the sign of the cross and offered fervent

prayers while invoking the sweet name of Jesus. With these defenses against all perils, he continued along his path, which he believed he would traverse more swiftly by running. However, the apparition did not entirely dissipate; instead, it morphed into various shapes, at times appearing larger and at other times smaller. Eventually, it assumed the form of a very large Molossian dog and, retaining this shape until the end, it ceased to be terrifying.

As a result, the man, having been tormented enough by these specters, finally reached a massive cliff, where he saw a chapel dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. He needed to pass by it on his way. As soon as he wholeheartedly recommended himself to this sacred sanctuary, the horrifying apparition vanished with such a great commotion and tumult that nothing remained of it. He regained his composure, although still shaken and terrified, he fell ill with a fever, which later developed into a tertian fever.

The reason why these apparitions are said to fear swords, other weapons, horses, and dogs is not because they are vulnerable to physical attacks, nor because these objects are governed by Mars, as some Platonists have imagined, believing in the existence of certain sympathies and antipathies in all things. Even Psellus, who claimed to have expelled a demon from a possessed person with a drawn sword through a certain demon called Anaphalang, did so without valid reason. These spirits are entirely incorporeal and do not excel in dominion over the forms they assume. Nor is it due to the opposing power of higher intelligences of their kind. If this were the case, not all encounters with these spirits would result in their vanishing upon confrontation, but only those that, in some way, submit to Mars.

Instead, I assert that this occurs because these spirits possess a stronger mental presence, which is why, when they encounter it, they are not always able to instill fear, especially when the vigor of our minds thwarts their intended effects. This happens because they are repelled by divine grace and do not always succeed in inducing the fear they desire.

Furthermore, these malevolent spirits often carry out their operations through the individuals they torment, especially when the victims are in a state of terror. This occurs either when the spirits are dispatched from above for the

purpose of retribution or when they are invoked by the actions of wrongdoers. They relentlessly plague these individuals and seldom depart from them. At times, they are only forced to leave with great difficulty, as if fleeing from the works of God, to the extent that they dare not remain. This is why they dread the relics of certain saints who have triumphed over them. They are compelled to flee, much like they would from the divine, God-ordained works, not out of their own volition.

They do not retreat due to the presence of the Eucharist, where they endure, albeit not without great suffering. Even in the early days of the emerging Church, they were expelled from the possessed in the name of Jesus or through the sign of the cross, a practice that the Holy Church has upheld since the time of the apostles. The Hebrew Synagogue followed a similar practice, harnessing the power of certain saintly relics that inspired profound fear in these spirits due to the saints' victories over them. As a result, the spirits were forced to flee from these objects, just as they would from God-ordained works, compelled by the same divine authority.

Hence, their effect is not the same in the presence of the Eucharist, where they persist, albeit not without enduring great torment. These actions are carried out not out of mere curiosity or for the purpose of persuasion but rather from genuine piety. An example of this was recently reported in Naples in a certain haunted house, where spirits were poured into a bowl and a vessel before the eyes of the occupants. In the past, during the time of St. Simeon, these spirits were driven out from those possessed, causing them to exit their homes, often disrobed and wounded, with great shame and humiliation, all while trembling in fear. However, they were imitating the practices of the Holy Catholic Church, motivated by sincere piety rather than mere curiosity.

In our time, with the Church having flourished and established itself through numerous great miracles, it should not come as a surprise that demon exorcisms are not as frequent as they once were. This is partly because now, in many cases, these spirits are permitted to afflict the faithful as a form of punishment for their sins. Moreover, these spirits, through their involvement in exorcisms of often sinful individuals, sometimes gain the upper hand to the

extent that they refuse to leave the possessed persons. Therefore, exorcists must exercise caution in allowing others to participate in exorcisms, especially those who have become cunning due to their frequent engagement with the Holy Church in such rituals. These individuals vigorously resist and, in doing so, discourage exorcists, dissuading them from this work due to their strong aversion.

Despite this, they sometimes appear to resist magical rituals, superstitions, symbols, and characters, especially those employed by the Greeks in our regions, known as "Hydrunti" or "Caloieros," with limited success or at times with substantial resistance. However, this resistance is not without a degree of deceit, as it contributes to the gradual erosion of faith in the world. Moreover, if one demon does not endure greater malevolence from another demon, even a more superior one, and sometimes disagrees, it is not exorcised. When the Greeks cast them out in this manner, they depart from the bodies but remain deeply embedded in the darkness of souls. What was once perhaps just a penalty has now turned into a fault, often with the consent of the possessed.

In this context, it is not appropriate to force them in this manner, as it leads to a grave sin. They may resist leaving, particularly because we are strictly forbidden from any form of interaction or association with demons or their activities, as is fitting. Although it is occasionally recounted that saints and the righteous had the authority to command demons, as seen with Dionysius the Areopagite commanding Hermogenes to bring the demons to him, and Simon the Jude ordering the demons to destroy their own statues and idols, these saints, being representatives of God Himself, were obeyed due to their merits and faith, even though they were naturally superior. Nevertheless, divine will and judgment, often for just causes and reasons, occasionally required them to withdraw as victors from the battle. Therefore, even different angels are said to refrain from approaching the matter by which they succumbed to temptation, in order to avoid further trials or falling into the same temptation again, at least for a certain time.

Nor are they said to tempt only when they occupy bodies; rather, when they obsess in this manner, they are hindered by reason, so they cannot be in a

state of meriting or sinning, especially when the power of imagination is disturbed. They do not constantly torment the imagination; instead, they desist from tormenting every three or four days or even longer. Sometimes they concentrate the soul's powers in such a way that they seem to obstruct even its proper movements. John Baptist Attendolus, a man well-versed in linguistic knowledge and exceedingly skilled in all types of sciences, accurately observed this while exorcising a certain possessed individual. He was the Duke of Capua.

Furthermore, not all demons are forced to leave when they possess someone, as they have different spirits that occupy various bodily organs, and they are driven out not only due to the obvious crimes of the possessed but also because of the diverse types of spirits that possess them.

In addition, the power and strength of all those who perform exorcisms are not equal, just as not all those present have such great virtues that they can confront the demons directly and thoroughly. As a result, those possessed do not fear the presence, force, or authority of the exorcists as much as one might think. Indeed, while exorcising, other spirits come to their aid, opposing them, making the situation even more complicated. However, the most troublesome of these spirits are the mute ones who are never compelled to leave by exorcism unless they are moved to speak in the same way as the others.

These spirits, though they inflict various types of diseases on our bodies and stir up marvelous imaginations in our souls, do not have any control over the human will. Our intellect is affected by these spirits in such a way that our eyes are not closed to the semblances of things. Nevertheless, they do not have any control over our right will, as this belongs solely to God. It is the only thing that has truly remained immune and free in humans. However, it is not free from misery, for since Adam's transgression, it has drawn only evil from the world. It is not free from sin except through the grace of the Son, but it has always been free from necessity, from which this faculty of the soul has been free both before and after.

However, demons, although unable to force sin upon us, are known to hinder

the imaginative power in the insane and disrupt the memory of those in a lethargic state. These rebellious spirits of darkness don't consistently cast an overwhelming shadow upon us, despite being embodiments of darkness themselves. They do not envelop us in such a way that all light is completely extinguished from our surroundings. In fact, they have revealed many things to humanity that relate to eternal salvation and truth, even though they would prefer to keep these hidden due to their treacherous nature. Nevertheless, they are compelled to manifest them.

Similarly, when they aim to deceive someone, they display things they would rather conceal – pretending to desire what they actually despise. Otherwise, they would enlighten the intellect, which they are incapable of, especially when they entirely lack love. They cannot possess what comes later in nature before what precedes it. Therefore, everything observed and revealed in dreams, particularly to the unfaithful and those tainted by sin, except for widely known matters, is attributed to these spirits. Angels themselves are sent to reveal these things to them, as we see in the case of Socrates when he received an interpretation of his dream about the swan. Even Galen, while cutting a vein on a sleeping man, learned how to do it while he was asleep. This phenomenon can also be observed at the Temple of Aesculapius in Pergamum, the temple of Serapis at Amphiarai, Canopus, Heliopolis, and the Temple of the Sun, where priests presented the meaning of sealed letters, whether literally or figuratively, to Emperor Hadrian.

In addition, there have been instances where the altar of Pasiphae at Ardala in Hircania and the devoted Bumastes have been known to reveal things. These revelations often come from both angels and deeper meanings, commonly referred to as gifts of fortune. This occurs mainly with certain foolish, stubborn, and perverse individuals who are favored by fortune, much like philosophers. Consequently, when they accumulate wealth through such means, they tend to behave even more perversely, as desired by the demons. Therefore, one should recognize that spirits can grant and take away riches as they see fit. On occasion, they may add a small sum of money. However, this is done with the intention of deceiving and tempting humans. When people are showered with riches and become consumed by desire and pride, they are more prone to falling into vices.

Hence, it's not without reason that our Savior often reproached the wealthy, as wealth does not make us more diligent in following the path of truth and justice. It is through this path that we can avoid the snares of demons.

Moreover, some theologians advise rejecting this abundance, deeming it extremely harmful and detrimental to the salvation of the soul. They argue that where there is treasure, there is often a man's heart. This is confirmed by the very truth itself. They also recount instances where these spirits supposedly advised Alexander to have his soldiers wear a kind of amulet against snakebites and Lysander to lift the siege he had imposed on the city of Aphytis. However, in both cases, these actions could have been influenced by good angels, as kings are also capable of performing such deeds.

Nonetheless, demons never engage in actions for virtuous purposes, whether they concern natural or moral goods. Even though they can manipulate weather, provoking rain and showers, especially when the earth is dry, their intention is not to benefit humanity but rather to deceive. On occasion, they may seem to induce favorable winds and even appear to rebuke, chastise, or offer admonishments to those who reject religious beliefs, such as Dionysius of Syracuse, Phlegyas, and many others. They have also made predictions in dreams that might appear advantageous, as well as spoken through statues to accuse individuals who were subsequently punished. Instances of such occurrences can be found in pagan history.

However, all of these actions are not motivated by genuine concern for human well-being. Instead, they serve to gain greater trust and authority through deception and illusions. Consequently, some of their own temples have been destroyed by fire due to the superstitions that they encouraged but ultimately disregarded. Notable examples include the temples of Apollo at Delphi, which were destroyed three times, the temple of Diana at Ephesus, which suffered two destructions, the temple of Ceres at Miletus, the temple of Juno at Argos, and the temple of Apollo in Rome. These acts aimed to display their power, assert their claims, and attract more followers to their worship.

The entire Potitii family, having sacrificed to Hercules, met their demise within a single month. It's important to note that not all demons share the same inclinations for malevolence. They can be categorized, each specializing in the vices they excel at, and they employ cunning and well-organized strategies to harm humanity. These demons maintain communication with their leader, Lucifer, reporting on individuals they have tempted around the world. Furthermore, they often assume various forms when interacting with humans, sometimes taking on human appearances.

Each of these demons possesses a pronounced ability to agitate or disrupt the elements in which they reside. This is the reason why the inhabitants of the ether, referred to as Siliurion, along with other, less malevolent entities, frequently manifest various celestial omens. These demons maintain a perpetually cheerful disposition, taking pleasure in the afflictions of mortals and reveling in the annihilation and misfortunes of various forms, akin to denizens of the aerial realm. Some individuals, albeit erroneously, entertain the notion that these entities might one day repent for their transgressions, much like us. However, having turned away from God, they neither possess the desire nor the capacity to find their way back to the righteous path; these entities are the legends of antiquity. Certain accounts suggest that through specific incantations, some of these demons could manipulate the air, transforming it into clouds and rain, summoning winds, hail, and lightning, and even claiming the power to precipitate wool, wax, clay, stones, and iron from the skies.

Regarding those who dwell within the aquatic domain, they frequently incite tempestuous sea waves, endangering seafarers, particularly when their attempts to harm humans do not unfold as intended. On occasion, they might appear to sailors in the guise of Nymphs and Tritons, and more often, they manifest as Castor and Pollux under specific illumination, as recounted in ancient tales. I must concede that angelic intervention can also be perceived in this context, especially in the case of virtuous and faithful mariners. We have previously discussed that philosophers who attribute the origin of this light to nature or chance are in error. In contrast, the terrestrial demons, who specialize in various malevolent deeds, frequently trigger substantial earthquakes and upheavals, often accompanied by ominous signs of

impending catastrophes. There have been instances of their capability to divert the courses of rivers, straying them from their natural channels, and even causing mountains to tremble to their very foundations.

Among these entities, some prove to be even more malevolent than the rest. They dwell underground in caves, reminiscent of the cave of Trophonius, or seek refuge in wells, perpetually drawn towards the depths of Tartarus, from where they draw the Stygian water and bring it forth into our world. They possess the ability to taint and corrupt the very elements themselves to such an extent that, akin to a dire deluge emerging from the fabled Babylonian ark, they unleash this dreadful scourge upon our era through their virulence and contagion, causing widespread devastation previously unknown to the Greeks, Latins, and Arabs. These malevolent and dreadful spirits, known by some as Alaſtores and Palamei, primarily corrupt air and water, thereby afflicting human bodies with chilling afflictions and ensnaring souls. Many Platonists contend that Apollonius of Tyana, in the guise of an old woman, was visited by one of these spirits, and when a heap of stones was hurled at him, all the epidemic spirits ceased to torment the region. This illustrates the power these spirits wield over us as a consequence of our transgressions, a rightful judgment from God.

No people can feign ignorance as an excuse, for the eternal light emanating from the heavens, radiating brilliantly from the very heart of the Earth, has been visible for a considerable span. Had the spirits of darkness so desired, they would have been well aware of this. Moreover, despite the claims made by many of these spirits, asserting their celestial nature and performing extraordinary feats, such as casting a solar eclipse upon the entire world during a full moon—an event so exceptional and defying the natural order that it allowed the true God to become apparent from God, and light from light—even then, it was evident that they did not embrace the light. As witnessed by Dionysius the Areopagite, a distinguished philosopher, he proclaimed, "Either God permits the laws of nature to be breached, or the entire machinery of the world shall be dissolved."

Although the influence of demons is significant, not every unfortunate event can be attributed to them as the sole culprits. There are four types of

consequences that we, due to our sinful nature, may encounter: those resulting from the natural order, divine administration, harm, and malevolence.

Evils are considered to arise from nature when they can be traced back to celestial motions and the influence of stars. Divine administration comes into play when God enforces justice through angels, as exemplified when the angel, in passing, struck down the firstborn of the Egyptians or when God's intervention led to the demise of a hundred and fifty thousand soldiers in Sennacherib's army or the death of Belshazzar, the Babylonian king, in his own dwelling, as a clear warning.

Harm, on the other hand, occurs when God, while demanding penalties, grants some degree of power to these malevolent spirits. This enables them to act, not autonomously, but solely to fulfill God's will. They are bound by divine command and, despite being associated with causing harm, their actions are driven more by obedience to God's will than their own desires. As such, they can never act in opposition to God's will, whether it is for good or evil. Anything related to the natural order or resembling an accident is not attributed to malevolence. In the end, it results in punishment for the wicked and eternal goodness for the righteous, and is not inherently evil.

Hence, in the past, many astonishing and extraordinary phenomena occurred among these ancient nations. These events were permitted by divine justice with the aim of sowing superstitions among the unbelievers of the present, who would be more deeply entangled in these beliefs. Demons played a role in this, stirring up rain by unearthing the ashes of Anchises, preserving the sacred sites of Minerva from decay, safeguarding the remains of Patroclus in Philoctetes' tomb from being scattered by fierce winds, and preventing rain in the temple of Venus at Paphos while it rained elsewhere. They even made the idol at Peneleos manifest, striking terror into all who gazed upon it.

For this reason, in a bygone era, Troy possessed the Palladium, which was subsequently subject to transformation into the golden apples of Mauritania due to a fateful incident. On the same day, it was venerated in Eleusis through a ritual, during which all the Muses met their demise. Similarly,

among the Egyptians, they conjured the Ibis serpents, which were poised to consume all in their path but were directed to fly exclusively toward a particular ship, sparing the vestal virgins.

Moreover, in certain instances, punishments exceeding what was commensurate with their inherent nature were imposed. This is because it is customary for these spirits, who serve as instruments of divine will, to administer such punishments within the extraordinary framework of divine justice. A clear example of this is seen in the case of Lot's wife, who was transformed into a pillar of salt by them, exemplifying their authority to temporarily chastise souls. These actions are not inherent to their nature but are solely carried out in accordance with divine intent. However, these spirits often achieve outcomes associated with malevolence when manipulated by wicked individuals. These malevolent individuals employ various means, such as concoctions, herbs, stones, animal blood, human hair and nails, serpent sheddings, and specific sacred incantations. All these elements, used in blatant defiance of God, serve as offerings to bring about the destruction of humanity. Indeed, all these outcomes, which are frequently connected to particular symbols, warrant careful examination to uncover the truth beneath them.

Hence, all the images employed by this superstitious group can be categorized into two groups. Those created based on star observation are termed astrological, while those not reliant on such observations are known as necromantic. The former are said to be linked to the celestial realm but remain inactive unless crafted from precious materials like gold, silver, gemstones, and other appropriate metals to ensure long-lasting attachment to the body. Conversely, the latter are believed to be formed independently of star observations and can be fashioned without distinction for individuals of noble or humble status. They can even exert their effects without physical contact. Both types, it is known, are conceived and used by demons, albeit through different methodologies. Astrological images are formed quietly, while necromantic ones are openly created.

Those who possess deeper knowledge of these practices and base their arguments on solid reasoning, refuting the beliefs of these individuals,

contend that neither the creators of these images nor their users are absolved of culpability. They assert that astrological images, in particular, are inherently devoid of any power since they are incapable of influencing anything by themselves, numeric designations, or celestial forces, as they do not belong to the primary qualities. If this were the case, a sword could simply harm a person due to its celestial appearance, rendering the tales they weave mere myths for children. No Greek, therefore, would have authored such fabrications.

So, what is the source of power in these objects when, as previously mentioned, their effects do not emanate from the images themselves or the heavens? The conclusion is that these malevolent spirits are the ones who have devised these methods, images, and symbols. Some individuals, in their misunderstanding, propagate the notion that these objects harness a certain power and virtue descending from the celestial realm. They even concoct stories claiming to have witnessed these images occasionally, placed on the highest peaks of the ninth heaven. However, they are profoundly mistaken and misguided.

This argument is not undermined by the fact that Moses is said to have placed great trust in the knowledge of Egyptian arts and passed on the power of memory and forgetfulness to his wife through two rings: one for remembering and the other for forgetting. Similarly, it is inconsequential that Josephus reports Eleazar once healed a demoniac using a certain ring. In the Old Testament, there were no images made from forbidden animals in use that the devil could inhabit. Furthermore, it does not matter that Antiochus Epiphanes achieved victory over his enemies through a particular image that was repugnant to him. His success wasn't attributed to any inherent power he possessed, as some believed, but rather to the image's symbolic significance as a king and a sign of virtue.

Similarly, it doesn't matter that some scholars claim that certain images, which later displayed hidden effects, originated in the heavens under the influence of celestial bodies, as observed in recent years. For instance, there is a stone sculpted to resemble a serpent in Germany, surrounded by a large number of snakes, and Solomon's seal carved on a stone in the Verona field.

In both cases, remarkable effects have been witnessed. In one instance, a man born with a snake on his shoulder could miraculously heal snakebites with his saliva. In the other case, an individual in a high position, whom I personally know, observed a multitude of snakes mysteriously drawn to the stone with a serpent carving.

Since most, if not all, of these images lack inherent power or virtue, as previously mentioned, whether they are crafted under celestial influence or secretly impressed by the deceit of demons, as claimed to have occurred with Seleucus's anchor, received by his mother during a liaison with Apollo and recorded in pagan history as having been set in a ring. Or whether they are created by astrologers under celestial guidance, as depicted in stories about the nine Muses inscribed on specific stones, which, when carried by Pyrrhus, granted him an astonishing memory, and the seven planetary rings bestowed upon Apollonius of Tyana by Hyarchia, the princess of the Brahmans. These rings, when worn one by one for a corresponding number of days, enabled the wearer to continuously travel the entire world, maintaining youth and strength. Additionally, the images found in the Nile River in the possession of Thaulomanes, the Pontiff of the Maumethas, were believed to render crocodiles harmless and protect humans from their harm. They were also used to repel serpents in Byzantium.

In the past, Egypt, to whom the Greeks attribute knowledge in various sciences, employed these images in times of need. It wasn't because the Egyptians, despite their considerable knowledge, believed these images possessed inherent power. Rather, they used them as reminders of the celestial influences, closely linked due to the frequent infusion of their corresponding stars. By carrying these images, they believed they could more easily access these celestial influences, akin to entering a dream when falling asleep near a green image on the riverbank.

However, all other claims suggesting these images possess capabilities beyond this or believing in their powers represent grave offenses, more monstrous in moral character than in nature. Theologians, in particular, strongly detest and condemn the hidden tricks and deceptions of demons. Indeed, if these images truly held virtue from heaven, it would not diminish

over time, as they themselves neither die nor live for a specified duration, as some may imagine. Furthermore, many extraordinary events would have occurred, as evidenced in the cases of the rings of Gyges and Paracelsus. Gyges possessed an invisible ring, while the other had a ring that, when worn on his finger, struck great terror and fear into his enemies. Similarly, the Theraphim, which Laban used for foresight, and from which, according to Hebrew accounts, no one could escape their influence, would have yielded similar miraculous outcomes. Additionally, Micha, a priest of idols, employed them, and the Rabbis assert that many Hebrews fell into idolatry due to the wealth accumulated from these images.

Those images through which the stars are not seen have been introduced by the devil with cunning and artistry, as previously mentioned. They are no less abominable because they are inscribed with their own signs, instruments, and characters, and attributed to any demons they choose, presenting them as great masters of their craft. This is mainly done for the purpose of promoting more nefarious acts, as these images serve as visible symbols and are frequently used by malevolent individuals, often inscribed with their own blood. Some of these images are employed to incite lust, discord, fear, and hatred, while others are used to cause illnesses, concealed murders, and secret homicides. On the other hand, some are used for generating antidotes, diseases, lightning, storms, thieves, enemies, wild beasts, hatred, and snakebites.

Using these images, they unleash various illnesses, break into homes, manipulate the elements, and carry out all sorts of nefarious acts. Some examples illustrate this: when certain wax figures were submerged in water by their own hands, numerous small waxen effigies perished. And during the sinking of certain enemy ships at sea, particularly the banner of the Tatar Prince known as Bathi, bearing a character similar to the Greek letter X, dense fog enveloped the Polish army after the earth was struck, leading to their defeat and near-annihilation by the Tatars.

Concerning the illness of Duffus, the Scottish king, it is said that when his image was held near a fire by a malevolent person, he would sweat profusely and suffer from constant insomnia, mumbling incantations. As the wax

melted, he wasted away dramatically.

In addition to these dreadful and wicked images and symbols, these most malevolent individuals often incorporate holy anointing oil, various sacraments, and numerous sacred rituals into their practices, displaying their profound disrespect for God and acting under the instigation of demons. Among these abhorrent diabolical images and dire specters, they even include the most sacred Cross, previously denied with their words and horrifyingly trampled upon thrice or four times. They also attach grains, ribbons, and pieces of clothing to those upon whom they intend to bestow these malevolent charms. Through these objects, the demons, whatever remains of them, work in such a way that they fulfill the desires of those who create these items through their connection to their inherent virtues.

Furthermore, using the hidden names of demons, they incorporate nails, hair, and the remains of the deceased, particularly those who, in their despair, have taken their own lives. The devil takes pleasure not so much in the material itself but in the fact that humans bestow upon him the honors ascribed to God. They also tend to include snake skins, which they often wrap in membranes and conceal at crossroads or in other clandestine locations. Sometimes, these objects are hidden in various places where Satan was once openly worshipped or subjected to some form of humiliation.

It is indeed remarkable for the devil to covertly claim divine honors in a place where he was once openly revered or had faced disgrace. With these sinister images and symbols, and occasionally by placing them in pots and dishes, they have committed heinous acts. For instance, they have ignited towns, as occurred a few years ago in Schilftad among the Germans. Some of these malevolent substances are potent poisons. While others incorporate these elements not because they lack efficacy on their own, but rather, because these wrongdoers aim to solidify their unholy connection with God, thereby inflicting greater harm upon Him, they add them to their concoctions.

Moreover, these wicked individuals also infuse demonic images and symbols into sacraments, anointing oils, and other sacred rituals, as an expression of their profound contempt for God. They even include the most sacred Cross,

which they had previously renounced verbally and desecrated three or four times (a horrifying act). They combine it with grains, ribbons, and pieces of clothing among the items they prepare for these purposes. Through these objects, the demons, by virtue of their connections, act in a manner that fulfills the desires of those who create these things, thus committing grave transgressions.

In this regard, demons are responsible for the most severe calamities, such as floods and fires, when they operate through malevolent individuals and their instruments. At times, they may bring about heavy rains from the sky, but unlike the way Elijah once prayed to God, who then ignited a great fire from water itself, these demon-induced events do not follow a divine course. This distinction is not surprising because demons must first study the natural elements, the time of day, and specific celestial conditions, as recently witnessed when a particular magician, during Mars's designated hour, placed a frog's leg on a lake, removed it, and subsequently triggered thunderstorms. Sometimes, these disasters and plagues are brought about through these demonic interventions, even without direct physical contact, as previously discussed, affecting those for whom they are intended.

Conversely, astrology functions differently and cannot produce such effects without deception, as astrologers would lose their followers' faith if their fraudulent practices were exposed. For example, when a demon appears as a lion before a rooster, it is not due to a more potent solar influence (as some Platonists believe), but because the stars assign a specific power to the rooster and accordingly determine their influence. Demons must carefully observe the nature of the stars, the timing, and the celestial configurations to enact these effects, as recently observed by those who found that, under the influence of Mars, during certain hours, they could incite powerful thunderstorms.

Therefore, with the aid of these sinister methods, often provided by demons, and by relying on their own persuasions, wrongdoers can frequently achieve many things in this earthly life. Nothing stands in their way, and they can convince themselves that the consequences of their misdeeds are a result of their own will rather than divine will. In this manner, they become

condemned by their own choice, with the devil's power acting in accordance with divine justice to test us, Christian soldiers, so that we do not jeopardize our eternal salvation through idleness or neglect. Consequently, the lord and master of this entire universe, symbolized by gold and silver, is Mammon. Those who embrace its use genuinely and honorably are rewarded, but those who misuse it face perpetual punishment and disgrace. Those who have chosen the supreme and eternal good in this created and perishable world have not done so unjustly. For if they were to live eternally here, they would undoubtedly continue to sin and misuse created things. It should not surprise anyone that wrongdoers, who cannot themselves commit so many great evils, summon demons to assist them. Those who are found on the path, as theologians say, are more prone to sin than those who have reached the destination, as they are allowed to exercise their free will and, thus, enjoy the best privilege.

Furthermore, it is not inappropriate to consider that demons often inflict punishments on the wicked, as seen when they tempted Mary, the sister of Moses, or afflicted virtuous individuals like Job and Tobias with many hardships. Sometimes, even in the case of the saints, due to the original sin that subjects them to bodily punishments, God's unchanging justice is known to employ the actions of these spirits for His purposes. He assigns them this role so that, while the virtuous receive a greater reward, the wicked endure more severe torments and punishment.

It is important to note that demons do not frequently approach saints with the same intensity and fiery rage as they do with the wicked. They often attack the wicked out of sheer malice. Astonishingly, beyond what can be believed, the saints are wary of their merits, and they detest these actions to such an extent that they experience great sadness when they learn that some of these deeds are being stored in the treasuries of the Church. However, not all bodily punishments, as with the wicked, can be imposed on the saints or righteous individuals at their discretion. It is said that some are shielded from these malevolent powers and cannot be affected by them, either externally or internally, in any way. This is done to ensure that these illusions do not hinder their path to merit, especially since they deserve greater rewards than the wicked for their love of Christ, as demonstrated by the true story of Saint

Macarius. Some people believed that a certain girl transformed into a mule, but she appeared to him unchanged in both form and substance.

To better understand the distinction between diseases arising from someone's physical condition due to an excess or deficiency of bodily humors and those that originate from demons, it is essential to note that the former tend to develop gradually, and the pain is barely perceptible at the outset. On the other hand, diseases caused by demons manifest severe symptoms and pain from the very beginning, even if there are no issues with the humors in the body. They often resist all kinds of remedies, and it is rarely the case that someone is cured through the efforts of physicians. This is evident in the cases of King Asa, who, despite having faith in physicians, did not recover from his foot ailment, and the people afflicted by a plague due to their alienation from the true God in the case of Cuthei. Such severe symptoms and pains typically occur when the power of the demons, unlike that of the angels, is not diminished by our sins, but rather intensifies the punishments. In these situations, the maladies exceed the efficacy of all remedies, rendering the diseases incurable.

Furthermore, they achieve this by either corrupting our inner humors or employing concealed means that elude our senses. They possess an intimate understanding of the properties of various substances, along with the precise application and timing of each, surpassing human comprehension in this regard. They can carry out these tasks swiftly, working in continuous time rather than the discrete time used by us. This is because of their nature, which significantly differs from that of the angels in terms of substance and inner actions.

It should not come as a surprise that demons, though incorporeal, can be present in a location. Their presence is not determined by physical size but by the quantity of their power. Thus, they can influence places just as spoken words reach the hearts of listeners, causing pain, sorrow, or even inducing epilepsy, akin to how the moon affects the brain of an epileptic. They do not occupy space as corporeal entities do because they do not require substance or materiality to exist in a location. However, we do not hold the belief that these spirits exist in a place due to their operation, as some suggest, because

they require a place for their existence just as they require substance or materiality. Their presence in a particular place is perceived through their external actions, not because they need it for their own perfection, as they are most perfect by nature. Instead, they may be in a place to acquire new knowledge or cause harm to a particular person or achieve a specific goal.

It should be noted that not all of these spirits can apply their power equally to move toward a specific and determined location when passing through a medium. The spiritual size, which is nothing other than power and perfection, can encompass a larger space in which nobility and excellence predominate. Therefore, the superior spirits reach their destination faster than the inferior ones. It should not be assumed that multiple demons, due to their lack of physical bodies, can occupy one place simultaneously. All of them adhere to the same prescribed method for their approach, and the presence of more than one demon in a person does not imply that they occupy the same place, as they have different places designated for their diverse crimes. This is why, in the Gospel story, we read about seven demons being cast out from Mary Magdalene, even though there is only one physical body.

Moreover, these spirits do not inflict the same level of harm through malefic practitioners; rather, they cause greater harm through individuals bound to their wickedness by solemn oaths, resulting in more extensive losses and suffering. Consequently, some of these malefic practitioners, merely through the power of their gaze, or, to put it differently, by casting spells using mere words, sounds, smoke, and odors, not only bring various illnesses upon people, as mentioned earlier, but also introduce these spirits into human bodies. They can manipulate the inner senses of individuals to the extent that their perception of reality is altered in terms of shape, color, and size. By leading them into such absurd actions, they ultimately drive them to madness, further oppressing them. As a result, these individuals may even come to believe that they have undergone a transformation, defying the natural order of things. For instance, some may dream of themselves turning into wolves, reminiscent of the ancient Arcadian practice that occurred after a human sacrifice to Lycaean Zeus at a specific lake.

It is reported that they witnessed a man named Demeratus, who had tasted the

entrails of the sacrificed child, being transformed into a wolf. In more recent times, as I have heard from credible witnesses, such as Johannes Faber of Prussia, renowned for his knowledge of languages and various sciences, these transformations took place in Livonia and Muscovy. In these regions, many were transformed into animals after consuming certain foods, as reported in classical authors. Similarly, it is believed that in Congo, many are chastised by being turned into lynxes.

In the past, Circe transformed Ulysses' companions into animals in Caieta, and this is documented. Saint Augustine also mentions instances where some unfortunate individuals were similarly affected, compelled to work like beasts. Apuleius, too, did not hesitate to claim that he experienced this at the hands of certain sorcerers.

Todas estas situaciones no son más que engaños e ilusiones causados por los demonios. Nadie, ni siquiera levemente versado en el estudio de los cánones y la teología, puede ignorar o mostrarse indiferente a este asunto. Como se mencionó anteriormente, no existe material, y, por lo tanto, Satanás no tiene control para cambiar o aumentar las cosas, ya que esta autoridad pertenece exclusivamente a Dios, el Más Bueno y el Más Grande. El poder infinito de Dios se extiende tanto a la materia como a las formas de todas las cosas. No obstante, esto no implica que Satanás no pueda manipular los cuerpos para que parezcan diferentes a lo que son, creando ilusiones que no dependen de trucos visuales, como en los que sobresalían los antiguos o en los que todavía sobresalen los irlandeses, ni a través de la aplicación de sustancias naturales, aunque a veces pueden actuar como los etíopes lo hacían, entre los cuales estas cosas eran muy comunes. Sin embargo, su verdadero poder radica más en su capacidad para manipular fantasmas, lo cual va más allá del mundo natural.

De esta manera, estos espíritus traicioneros se han presentado a la gente en diversas formas. Se manifestaron como una masa dorada a San Antonio, y como una lechuga a una determinada monja que también estaba involucrada en artes engañosas y pitónicas. Transformaron a una bruja noruega, conocida por sus habilidades mágicas, en una vaca cuando no pudo matar a un hombre llamado Fronton con su magia, a pesar de que llevaba hierro. Las historias del

norte también relatan transformaciones similares, incluyendo un caso en el que una mujer llamada Augustina, una bruja de Córdoba que había cometido muchas maldades, fue convertida en una vaca. No hace mucho, los informes de escritores del Nuevo Mundo mencionan a una mujer llamada Beatriz Cueva, que ejerció el poder en la región de Guatemala. Se dice que ella también sufrió muchos males a manos de estos espíritus y fue transformada en una forma parecida a la de una vaca.

Aunque estos y otros sucesos similares podrían atribuirse a las artimañas de los demonios, es importante tener en cuenta que no todas las personas están expuestas a estas experiencias en nombre de los demonios. Se ha descubierto que muchos mortales a los cuales estos espíritus no influencian, especialmente aquellos que se consideran propiedad de Dios y enfrentan un castigo público por sus malas acciones. La justicia divina los santifica. Sin embargo, aquellos que son impulsados por la curiosidad a menudo caen víctimas de estos espíritus y pueden incluso encontrar la muerte a manos de los mismos, según afirman algunos.

The reason why these spirits cannot harm just judges and those who faithfully perform their duties is that if they had any jurisdiction over them, it would imply that they have authority over God Himself, which is utterly absurd. It is believed that individuals who have devoutly sprinkled themselves with holy water in the morning or have received benefits from angels are immune to the influence of these spirits. There is also a belief that those born under a specific celestial configuration that does not include Mars in their horoscope are avoided by these spirits. These individuals are regarded as having a protective aura, much like serpents avoiding certain enchanted songs or, more accurately, the potent words spoken by a skilled exorcist.

You might wonder why these demons take such care in avoiding planetary configurations, given that they are incorporeal beings. This behavior is most likely a cunning deception intended to associate celestial observers with the stars, attributing divine significance to celestial bodies and leading them into greater error. Another possibility is that they are not subject to the influence of celestial bodies but rather fear divine terror, known as "pahat" in Hebrew, which those who have delved into the true Cabala combined with astrology

understand well. This concept is exemplified by Jacob's statement to Laban, "Had not the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, been with me, you would surely have sent me away empty-handed" (Genesis 31:42).

Now, returning to our original topic, let's briefly discuss the actual and tangible transformation of things, albeit briefly and in the usual manner. It is said that although demons have some influence on material construction, they are more likely to assist nature through concealed movements and by adding hidden seeds under the sky. They help nature achieve its desires, rather than directly causing transformation in a genuinely inherent way. It's important to note that not all living beings can undergo this process, as their power extends only to those originating from decomposing matter and arising from some imperfect mixture.

Consequently, whatever miracles were performed by Pharaoh's magicians, Mambre and Jambre, were not the result of deception or trickery, as some claim, but were, in fact, real. It is not inconceivable that these spirits could possess such power from heaven. God, in His providence, sometimes allows even greater feats to be accomplished through magical arts, deceiving those who dabble in them and exposing them to the perils of fraudulence. Unless they repent, they shall perish. Simple and faithful individuals should be cautious and avoid such poisons rather than admire them. Moreover, when it comes to producing these wonders, magicians are not always capable of creating them through water. Divine mercy or the intervention of angels often hinders them, preventing the practice of such evils in sacred places.

In their ability to produce these phenomena, they work with astonishing speed. They understand that matter is already predisposed to celestial influence, allowing them to work with it instantly. They are not only quick in generating flies, frogs, and bugs but can also influence the development of matter over an extended period. This is evident in their creation of snakes, mice, and many other creatures, both terrestrial and aquatic, often found along the banks of the Nile. These beings can be shaped from mud through the sun's heat. In the islands of the Hesperides, it is reported that bird-like creatures resembling geese are produced in the ocean from decomposing

wood. While the finest philosophers do not deny these phenomena, there should be no doubt that demons can enhance the abilities of things and nurture them according to their nature, particularly when their forms are to be brought forth as if from the womb of matter. The strength of each element, as well as its proportions, plays a significant role in this, and demons possess a deep understanding of the constellations, as if they were privy to their secrets.

Certainly, I hold the belief that these spirits possess the capability not only to transmute base metals into gold and create the elusive philosopher's stone, an endeavor that our alchemists have tirelessly pursued, but also to engender other monstrous entities akin to chimeras. While these creatures do not conform to any recognizable species, they have been conjectured by natural philosophers to emerge due to erroneous transformations.

In fact, there are accounts of such occurrences in more recent times, notably in Brazil. It is reported that a grotesque and terrifying being, standing seventeen palms tall, adorned with scaly skin resembling a lizard, sporting damp and pendulous teats, a lion's mane, gleaming eyes that sparkled like its tongue, let out a thunderous roar before meeting its demise. The Jesuits, who have, in this modern age, acted as gatherers of souls for God akin to new apostles, demonstrated their power over the dominion of Satan through this incident. A similar phenomenon unfolded in Saxony, within the depths of the Hasbergen Forest, prior to the widespread emergence of Luther's heresy. This event was indeed both wondrous and horrifying, and the locals viewed it as a testament to the supremacy of the Catholic faith.

Therefore, it is not unreasonable for a philosopher to assert that nurturing such monstrous apparitions should be discouraged, as they seldom manifest without causing considerable harm. In this regard, ancient augurs and Roman diviners would decree public supplications upon encountering such spectacles, believing that by appeasing Jupiter, they could avert impending misfortunes for the Roman Empire. They were well aware that even if such phenomena had natural origins, they still bore the significance of signs from a higher power, in line with the ancient belief that such signs were manifestations of divine beings' displeasure.

These wonders performed by non-believers should not be classified as miracles, as some might suggest, but rather as prodigies and marvels. This is because miracles transcend the capabilities of the entire natural world and are specific and exclusive to the Church. Miracles are divine workings that occur within strict boundaries. They are extraordinary, one-of-a-kind, and impossible to replicate. I would not deny that, occasionally, under divine command or as a form of punishment for a great offense, demons may perform acts that appear miraculous, such as the transformation of Lot's wife into a pillar of salt, which defies the laws of nature.

Hence, these phenomena cannot be attributed to the gift of prophecy, as prophecy encompasses knowledge related to the spiritual advancement of the Church. These predictions, to prevent them from imposing their own outcomes, are destined not to come true in any way. It is evident that they do not originate from the Spirit of God, to which they are entirely disconnected, as it radiates with a brightness greater than the midday sun.

Furthermore, the fact that some non-believers and wicked individuals have made prophecies concerning our salvation through angelic intervention, like the Sibyl, Balaam, the Hydaspes, and Caiaphas, is not significant. This has happened as a result of public demonstrations of divine justice. Likewise, the notion that demons possess belief and faith in Christ is irrelevant. Their words, "Jesus, why have you come before your time to torment us?" do not signify genuine faith but rather a recognition of Christ's divine authority.

While they recognized Christ as the true Messiah promised in the law during His preaching, they could never be certain about His true divinity. In matters of the supernatural, they often become increasingly blind to the rays of truth, just as one's eyesight deteriorates in the presence of the sun. Their inherent and confirmed malice, like a callous formed over a long period of time, had hardened them.

Therefore, they acknowledged Christ as the author of such signs and even as God, but not by their own will. Their acknowledgment or attribution of praise could not benefit them in any way. Likewise, the fact that they sometimes recognized Jesus as a true and legitimate judge in the future did not change

their nature. They often wrote about seeking the prayers of saints to intercede for them before God.

For example, they claimed that the devil, appearing to Saint Anthony, the first hermit, begged him to reconcile with God. The demons did this pretending to seek salvation to deceive. They also deceived Origen by pretending that Christ had confided in them about His sufferings. It is possible that they said and did this seriously out of fear of impending, more severe punishments, or ironically, to satisfy their perverse desires. They may have wanted to show that even Christ, whom they initially rejected, begged for mercy out of fear of greater future punishments. Or they may have done so in a mocking or ironic manner or as a way to appease the principle of nature, which they do not hate with such intensity. Even though they no longer pursue good and grace from the source of all goodness, they probably wanted to obtain some favor from it.

It's worth noting that they are often referred to as familiar spirits because they frequently present themselves as domestic or household spirits to the common people. In various places and among different peoples, some establish a kind of familiarity with humans, often providing external goods and benefits. They can predict various events and dangers in distant locations and regions, seeming to warn and advise people in various ways, sometimes offering substantial assistance. They can influence the arms of their enemies in a way that renders weapons ineffective, causing deadly blows to miss or fail, as reported by some prominent historians from the northern regions.

Furthermore, there are accounts of a man receiving a robe as a gift from these spirits, which granted him complete protection from harm, whether deliberate or accidental. He also possessed a golden victory belt that, when worn, made him a formidable force in battle. This captivating display left all who witnessed it in awe, and he proved invincible in combat.

These spirits often form agreements with humans, and when urgently summoned, they stand ready to provide aid and assistance. For instance, they are said to have the ability to control the winds for sailors through the use of specific magical knots. Through their actions, they can slow down ships,

rendering them immobile until specific, albeit unusual, substances like virgin's excrement are applied. They acknowledge that this practice is considered disgraceful and understand their role as servants. They frequently offer their services in exchange for payment, as documented by reputable authors, especially in the region of Norway, and more frequently among the people of Birkarla.

In this region, when the inhabitants venture to work in their fields, they loudly inquire about the presence of these spirits. In response, they hear voices akin to an echo, which seems to appease them. As a result, they leave a fee behind a stone, and it promptly disappears, with no one in sight. These spirits are also believed to possess the ability to foretell the locations of hidden treasures, although this knowledge comes at a cost. They once disclosed the whereabouts of a treasure to a particular diviner who sought it, a fact I can confidently attest to, and is well-documented.

In the same region, there exist other spirits known as "Kobalos," who are not inherently malevolent unless provoked by laughter or other offenses. They often greet people with laughter and engage in conversation but always maintain their anonymity until their departure.

There are other spirits who can manifest without posing great danger to life and limb. Our common people refer to them as "mbras," but Latin writers call them evil geniuses. These entities sometimes appear, even at the moment of death, causing tremendous fear with their loud noises, voices resembling those of ill-omened birds, and eerie forms. They also evoke dread through the nightly apparitions of ignis fatuus (will-o'-the-wisps). I can recall witnessing such phenomena in my homeland, as have many others. Among these spirits, there was a certain prominent individual named Rotilius Poberius, celebrated for his noble birth and exceptional learning. He was a man of extraordinary wisdom and judgment, unaffected by every passing rumor or fickle wind; his resolve was unshaken.

More eminent rulers often reveal themselves through even grander signs, such as lightning. Such an event transpired with Caesar Augustus when his statue was struck by a falling flame, leaving only the letter "R" behind. The

ancient Etruscans referred to God as "R" and thus predicted Caesar's death within 300 days, according to the interpretations of soothsayers. A similar incident took place with Julian the Apostate, where heavenly fire descended upon him as he was offering sacrifices to his idols.

Occasionally, these spirits appear to ungrateful and malicious rulers in human form. They engage with them in a horrifying manner, delivering insults even as they feign admiration. One such spirit was found in Dion, opposing the highly ungrateful Dionysius, another in Sulla, challenging Marius, and a third in Brutus, confronting Gaius Caesar. Julian, even more ungrateful than Judas towards our Savior Jesus Christ, whom he had been baptized under, issued a public decree mandating disdain for Christ, the true light in whom we all live and move, subjecting Him to insults. He ordered that everyone sing hymns composed by him and offer praise to this figure, whom he perceived as if Christ were his servant.

It is worth mentioning that demons are often spotted in silver mines, as was the case in Annaberg, Germany, a few years ago. One of these demons, a frequent presence among the workers, eventually killed twelve of them with its poisonous breath. In a similar incident in the same mine, a hooded figure seized a man and cast him into the depths, resulting in his death, along with several others. Various types of demons are commonly encountered in these mines. Some of them break rocks, carve out caverns, and load stones into baskets and troughs. They operate wheels, lifting machines with pulleys and screws, their movements resembling the spinning of wheel spokes, with flickering reflections filling every corner of the mine. Some demons engage solely in laughter and merriment, while others terrify with their presence. Some merely seek to be seen and remain otherwise inactive. It is indeed astonishing how frequently demons appear in these mines, where, in contrast to the Ophanim, as the Hebrews say, they cannot reside in the realm of heavenly things. These inherently malicious beings, primarily focused on wickedness, are seen by God, in His infinite providence, to appear more often in earthly treasures than elsewhere. Despite their excellence in all aspects of beauty, including colors, sounds, and even various scents and flavors, and their prowess in speech, their extraordinary cunning has accustomed them to operate in secrecy, often remaining concealed from sight, lurking beneath the

surface of the senses.

Rather than suspecting that all treasures buried in the earth or submerged in water are guarded by demons, it is more appropriate to say that the Telchines, demons tasked with safeguarding treasures, are believed to enchant the souls of certain deceased individuals. Common people may imagine that these demons serve them, but, as mentioned earlier, souls cannot be bound to anyone other than God, the Creator. If certain malefactors, who are not few in number, experience anything beyond demonic occurrences near treasures, it is usually due to their own folly. Some employ magical staffs, while others offer sacrifices to the devil. They might feel the earth tremble, see mountains threatening to collapse, or encounter other illusions. Most of them are left with nothing more than empty hopes and end up living in extreme poverty. Paradoxically, they are better off than if they had acquired these ill-gotten riches because nothing positive can result from dealings with evil spirits.

What dreadful crimes people commit, driven by their diabolic desires, all in the pursuit of acquiring wealth! They show no hesitation in violating even the Sacraments themselves, which are held sacred within sanctuaries. It's baffling how they forsake the salvation of their own souls for the vain hope of meager profits. The depravity of some individuals is so profound that when demons, either through their own persuasion or in dreams, convince them of the necessity of such actions, they shamefully renounce their faith. This wasn't too long ago when it occurred to a certain priest in Nuremberg who, ardently pursuing these practices, met his end at the hands of the devil in the form of a dog while working in his cellar. A similar incident recently unfolded in Naples. Certain individuals, lured by the false promise of riches, summoned the devil through a necromancer. The necromancer claimed that the demon, compelled by a skull from a deceased person, would reveal the treasure's location. When they reached the designated spot, a total of four of them, they ended up trading their lives for death, resulting in nothing but profound disgrace and extensive losses.

Others have met similar fates for various reasons. For example, there was a man who, under the guidance of someone named Marso, attempted to enter a pit inhabited by serpents with the intention of gaining knowledge of their

venomous nature and using it as poison, akin to the practices of Melampus and Apollonius of Tyana. He had dabbled in the dark arts. Utilizing a magical incantation, he was about to enter the pit against the will of the largest serpent when it coiled its tail around him and pulled him in, leading to his demise. These most perverse demons, while not inherently compelled to cause harm, willingly inflict various afflictions upon human beings, as they don't always align with the demons' plans. While they may be mute, deaf, blind, weak, maimed, or missing limbs, and they may cause a variety of ailments, including paralysis, tremors, gout, jaundice, fevers, leprosy, and, most devastatingly, madness, they are not restrained from causing harm in any manner they please. This is evident in the case of Job, who endured numerous afflictions.

As they eagerly seek every opportunity to cause harm, as mentioned earlier, and possess a deep understanding of people's inclinations, they can, with divine permission and in response to our transgressions, afflict individuals with conditions such as muteness, deafness, blindness, weakness, amputations, and various other disabilities. Furthermore, they can introduce foreign objects into the bodies of those affected. Often, during exorcisms, these tormented individuals expel items like needles, hair, nails, and similar objects, which are not always visible, contrary to some beliefs, but are frequently concealed. This phenomenon can be observed, for instance, at the shrines of St. Brendan and St. James in Piceno, where such objects, along with even more remarkable wonders, are displayed prominently from the rafters for all to witness.

It's not surprising that these objects, once reduced to dust and ingested, can congeal inside the body due to their influence over matter, as previously mentioned. Equally worthy of admiration is the fact that, under their sway, individuals who had never learned different languages suddenly speak in various tongues, even though they themselves don't comprehend what they're saying. This phenomenon clearly shows that the spoken words are disconnected from the possessed individual's understanding. Some have suggested that demons, seldom using foreign languages with the afflicted, do so because of the crude and uncouth language they would employ if communicating in their own dialects. It's as if they can move and manipulate

the tongues they occupy at their discretion. Saint Jerome even attested to hearing a demoniac speak eloquently in Greek, Arabic, Hebrew, and Chaldean, all of which were foreign to him. Jerome Cardanus, who diligently studied natural phenomena, mentioned encountering a shadowy figure speaking in German, a language he had never learned. Psellus also noted a case where a Greek woman eloquently responded in Armenian. Another instance involved a Frenchman afflicted with an illness who was reported to have spoken in a regional dialect.

While I acknowledge that demons don't always resort to speaking in foreign languages when possessing someone, it's clear that they sometimes choose to do so to sow confusion, as it may be more conspicuous when they babble in an unknown language to the afflicted person than when they speak coherently. Such an incident occurred not long ago in Palermo when I was conversing with a young girl in both Latin and Greek. Her parents brought her, tormented by a demon, to the Church of St. Christine. They undertook this endeavor at great effort and with no less risk to her life in an attempt to free her from this affliction. Although she answered some questions correctly, she did so with great difficulty in selecting her words. I believe this was done to create the illusion that these deceitful spirits speak when they interact with the souls of the deceased, while at other times, they openly lie. It's possible that, driven by a certain pride, they mimic the Spirit of God, who, it appears, gradually refines the nature He inhabits rather than abruptly changing it in a manner that might seem destructive. They may not necessarily possess the power to manipulate the language of those they possess at will, as some have erroneously believed, deceived by the notion that demons lack such capability.

Regarding the previously mentioned girl, she was eventually liberated and survived through the intercession of this saint (whom, as is typical of heretics, they misrepresent). However, she was left debilitated to the point that, when seized by the spirit and tormented, she became so agitated that she had to be physically restrained by two men using chains. Such is the terrifying power that these malevolent spirits have been granted over unfortunate humans due to our sins.

Furthermore, concerning this possession, those who were present, claiming to be Aristotelian philosophers, were so astonished that they openly admitted that, after witnessing this, even Aristotle himself could not defend the existence of spirits. Nothing they had heard with their own ears could be attributed to some corrupting substance, as was commonly believed in the case of ecstasy and other similar phenomena originating from an intellectual source. For now, I will refrain from mentioning that, during exorcisms, these spirits sometimes cause the limbs of the possessed to swell, extinguish torches, and shatter tiles and glass windows in their presence. An incident of tiles breaking occurred in Sicily at the Church of St. Philip, where some tiles were even reported to have emitted sounds resembling the lyre, played by individuals who were otherwise unskilled and inexperienced, making each of them seem as accomplished as Sappho and Corinna. Despite their considerable power, these demons cannot possess multiple individuals simultaneously. As Vitellius Lindanus affirmed in his Panoplia, one demon fatigues and torments his host by his very essence, while another afflicts the same person out of malice. Even if separated by great distances, they concur that there is no difference in their actions when they seek to achieve the same goal. This is a theological matter.

Moreover, the malevolent spirit, upon observing that Solomon, through a particular art he had devised, employed censers, water, and the Hebrew name to banish the demons afflicting people, did not forget his trickery. With the aim of spreading superstitions and making them more widespread among the neighboring Egyptians, he immediately induced them to mimic this practice. As a result, they not only feigned retreat when presented with a bull or when they invoked the ship known as the "Baris," in which the relics of Osiris were believed to be preserved, but they also endeavored to rend the heavens and unveil the secret name of Serapis, which they believed could expel the demons. This was a heinous and impious act, viewed as a grave sin against all, a sin that God, as recorded by Moses, sternly condemned.

These practices were also employed with various natural substances by the people of ancient times, including silk, aristolochia, vervain, squill, rue, buckthorn, and sulfur. The Platonists held the belief that all these substances possessed qualities or hidden virtues that could counteract these malevolent

spirits. However, there appears to be some disagreement regarding this perspective. For instance, Raymond Lull believed that in order to demand retribution from these harmful spirits, it is crucial to openly attribute this authority to divine obedience.

Nonetheless, there are a significant number of wise individuals who argue that demons do not endure due to any of these virtues, but rather through a sort of analogy where lower things oppose higher ones. Alternatively, they persist due to the direct influence of opposing Intelligences that govern all the genera of things, as they wish it to be understood. These influences are not limited to things perceivable by the senses; they extend to those devoid of sensory perception. For instance, they highlight the behavior of the mustelid, which is observed to swallow a mandrake while appearing as if it's howling or screeching, with its mouth wide open, as if it were dying.

Furthermore, they point out that in things lacking sensory perception, like strings made from a wolf's intestines played on a lyre, they produce harmonious music, suggesting that such occurrences in animals go beyond the bounds of natural explanation. They argue that if this were not the case, how could certain herbs alleviate the suffering of dogs? Why does calamint instantly relieve the sting of a scorpion? Who taught the swallow to restore sight to the blind eyes of her chicks? Who instructed the crow on fertilizing eggs by rubbing them with a specific stone? Nevertheless, most theologians disagree with these viewpoints. They stress that these substances do not truly expel demons, not because each thing possesses inherent virtue or power or obeys a particular authority. Instead, they contend that these practices originated from ancient Egyptian customs related to cycles and water, practices prevalent among nearly all nations. One of these beings represented God in a superior form and aspect, while the other symbolized baptism as a means of liberation from their influence.

Although I do not deny that these spirits sometimes torment those upon whom divine wrath is inflicted more severely, they do not necessarily depart from these afflicted individuals when expelled by some specific virtue of substances. Instead, they often relocate to another place where they can cause disturbances. They do not retaliate against the individuals who have expelled

them since they themselves cannot be affected, as sacred scripture attests in the case of Saul, who was tormented by these spirits. For example, they are said to have come upon David while he was playing the lyre under the guidance of God's spirit and singing sweetly, or they came to Tobias and Sarah, both of whom were similarly afflicted. Josephus, a highly respected historian known for his reliability, also recounts the expulsion of a demon from a certain possessed individual, Barabbas, who was not dissimilar to Saul. Cardano also attests to this, stating that a certain demoniac named Phliarius was healed by the doctor Panaceum using an effective remedy. I can confirm this, for I used to experience nighttime oppression more frequently in the past, but it ceased after I used a potion provided to me by Johannes Baptista Carpanzanus, a man of exceptional talent and a distinguished doctor of law. With the help of these potions, I have never again experienced such nocturnal oppression. Certainly, our priests can make use of these remedies during exorcisms, but only after they have been blessed with specific prayers, which are known to possess their own power by virtue of the merits of Christ and the saints. Otherwise, these spirits could potentially cause more harm upon being expelled.

Furthermore, demons rarely present themselves to humans in familiar places without first forewarning of destruction and disaster. This is evident in instances such as in Freiburg among the Caroleans, where constant apparitions of specters were known to foreshadow sudden death, and in Parma among the Cisalpines, where rare sightings of phantoms were inevitably followed by the death of a family member within a few months.

A few years ago in our homeland, a malicious man (referred to as a demon in the scriptures due to his deceptive human-like appearance) appeared to a certain beautiful girl. He convinced her to inform her parents that a great treasure, hidden by their ancestors, was buried in a corner of their house beneath the ground. He assured her that he would help them excavate it with the intention of claiming it for himself as soon as possible. The girl, being credulous due to her gender, happily conveyed this to her parents. Struck with awe and admiration due to the novelty and astonishment of the situation, her parents wholeheartedly believed her. They were further encouraged by the rumors that had already spread about this hidden treasure.

Without delay, they enthusiastically began digging up the earth right down to the foundation of the house. Upon discovering certain signs initially, they became even more convinced of the presence of the treasure. As they continued to excavate day by day, the cunning deceptions of the demon led them astray with false clues, to the extent that the house almost collapsed, and they were almost crushed beneath it. There are reports that a certain demon named Floron caused a wall's foundation to collapse and crushed someone who dared to excavate it. However, when the demon realized that his initial attempt had failed, he adopted another strategy.

He started tormenting the house with horrifying noises and terrors, forcing the miserable inhabitants to move out. To this day, the house remains uninhabited, and even those who pass by it are terrified of its impending collapse. As mentioned earlier with the girl, it is often the case that the devil targets the younger sex more frequently, not because of any kinship or similarity of nature or will between them, but because they have weaker judgment and are more easily deceived. This is a tactic emulating God in the Old Testament, sending handsome young men to deceive and tempt. The devil employs this strategy in various instances to undermine faith.

A similar incident occurred not long after, when a different woman threw herself at him. Her husband, troubled by this, consulted with me and some other devout priests. He believed that the specter he saw was the soul of his recently deceased maternal aunt, who had taken on the appearance and attire of this woman. He was especially convinced because his wife, in order to give alms to the poor, offered constant prayers and arranged for masses to be celebrated. He thought that by assisting this woman and providing her a means of livelihood, it would be extremely beneficial for himself and his entire family.

Nonetheless, this hidden deception was eventually brought to light. It was revealed that this man had indeed engaged in an illicit relationship with this woman, embracing her against her will and despite her resistance. This continued until, through the intervention of several religious figures and their prayers, she was finally liberated from this vile affair. However, a great

calamity befell the family, and their downfall immediately followed.

Not long after these events, a spirit equally impure and defiled, or perhaps even the same one, appeared in the dead of night in a convent dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Although multiple nuns resided there, it seemed to target only one of them. Perhaps it was, by God's judgment, due to some sin committed by her parents, to which offspring are often prone. This caused great turmoil and unrest for about six months, until the miserable nun, who was the most affected, finally revealed the matter to her trusted companions. I was asked, and I willingly went there to investigate. Upon observing the possessed nun, I immediately recognized her distress and astonishment.

Moved by compassion, I encouraged her with a strong and steady spirit, advising her to completely disregard this apparition, as it could not harm anyone unwilling. Suddenly, and without any prior warning, in the presence of three honorable and devout nuns, this impure spirit appeared to me through a hole in the wall where the bell rope hung. It presented a terrifying visage with curly hair, a shaven chin, and a repulsive countenance that resembled Cepheus more than a human being. Startled and unsure of what to do, I stood up and shouted loudly, issuing threats against it. The nuns who were present were astonished by the sight, and upon hearing my cries, I did not cease my clamor until the spirit was compelled to flee.

Shortly thereafter, I was instructed to have the spirit, which had just been exorcised, demonstrate a sign as proof of its truthfulness. Without delay, the wretched nun descended the stairs in her usual manner. Before a most sacred image of the crucified Christ, the spirit assaulted her in a miserable and horrifying manner, draining her strength.

Furthermore, it is not hidden from me that, in addition to this, another even more terrifying incident occurred. A certain apparition manifested in a house, causing such disturbances and frequent disruptions that all the residents, overcome with fear and terror, were compelled to vacate the premises.

Drawn by the notoriety of this event, I, accompanied by several older individuals, ventured to visit the location. One among us, bolder than the rest,

identified himself amidst the chaos in the middle of the courtyard, saying loudly, "If you are indeed a spirit and not just some empty and frivolous entity, I wish that you would strike me with a stone." He then lowered his head, presenting himself as a target. Immediately, as instructed, the spirit complied. A stone weighing two pounds lightly touched his shoulder, with such ineffective force that he suffered no harm, even though the stone appeared to have been thrown with great force, bouncing off the ground and producing a loud noise. The amazement of the witnesses was profound, and there were various opinions about the motion of this stone. In my view, the stone had been carried through the air, like chaff blown by the wind. Some claimed that the noise echoing in our ears was merely a product of our own imagination, or it had resulted from the air colliding in a manner distinct from a stone's rebound.

It is not surprising that demons could hurl stones at humans, especially those steeped in sin. They have not refrained from doing so even to saints. For example, in Rome at the Church of Santa Sabina, a large cylindrical stone, akin to a millstone, was shown to have been thrown by a demon to the great astonishment of the witnesses. This would have hit its target if not for an angelic hand, hovering over the head of Saint Dominic, diverting the evil projectile.

Furthermore, the very same spirit, assuming the role of an exorcist, attempted to read the book of the Etruscan poet Ariosto with the intention of renouncing it. While doing so, he felt as though the book and his hand were being tainted by some vile substance, recognizing his mistake. At that moment, he suddenly hiccupped, indicating the departure of the spirit that had possessed him. In another episode, this identical spirit appeared in a dream to an elderly man and hinted, "Come, Brother Nicchia, run away; Saint Benedict is here." With these words, the spirit vanished, albeit not without causing damage to the house.

Additionally, it is widely acknowledged that demons themselves often serve as the causes and instigators of enchantments. While some philosophers attribute these effects to hidden properties, whether through the innate nature of the human heart that can alter the body and influence the eyes, or to the

malevolent intent of those practicing enchantments, or even to an inherent power in animals that becomes corrupted during menstruation and pollutes the air.

They claim that this contamination is so potent that it can affect the eyes of innocent children who happen to witness those performing enchantments, leading to sudden illnesses or other diseases. Occasionally, even mirrors shatter when reflecting the eyes of menstruating women. It's also said that enchantments can strip someone of their voice if they have been previously observed by a wolf or have made eye contact with the venomous gaze of a basilisk, ultimately resulting in their death.

However, it is evident that those who attribute all these effects solely to nature are mistaken and deceived. No one, regardless of how malicious their intentions, can be found capable of casting a camel headlong into a pit with just a gaze or with some hidden power, suddenly breaking the silk collecting machinery, transforming water into a bloody hue, or killing the mightiest ox, as occurred in our city. As Pliny records, it is claimed that trees wither from mere touch. The same is mentioned of the Triballi and continues to be associated with the Biarmians, who are known to bind individuals with specific spells and knots in such a way that those bound are neither free in body nor in control of their minds. They waste away under these bonds and eventually die in misery.

This cannot be imprinted by a superior soul onto an inferior one, as some falsely believe. For example, Avicenna asserts that this malevolence can be inflicted on someone, even in their absence, through powerful imagination and malevolent intent. Nor does it stem from an inherent property of one's character, as was claimed to make Augustus fear Mark Antony. It is not caused by any particular celestial influence or by the virtue of intelligences, nor does it originate from the power of the soul itself. If intelligences, far superior to all souls, can prevail over them without the intervention of another agent, then why would they not succeed with their own malevolent intentions or hidden properties?

They would not succeed in this manner, especially since nothing can be

transformed into the nature of a substance or an accident without an intermediary. It is also impossible for these effects to be produced by the power of the stars, as they operate gradually. Furthermore, if these were purely natural effects, they would not occur so infrequently, and it is not credible that angels commit such malevolence since they have no dealings with the wicked and sinful, as is the case with this type of enchantment.

Hence, it is evident that these deceptions are the handiwork of demons who, frequently with divine permission, respond to the desires of wrongdoers. The devil employs such individuals as his servants and tools, manipulating them at his will. A case in point is a woman from Westphalia who, through dire imprecations and curses, rendered her son motionless, as though he were a statue, in a specific location. It is reported that she accomplished similar feats through her curses.

Additionally, these malevolent spirits are known to utilize similarly sinister instruments to affect people, particularly elderly women. They do not rely solely on the natural properties of herbs, roots, juices, and gemstones, topics extensively covered by figures like Zoroaster, the king of the Bactrians, Hermes Trismegistus, the Babylonian Gemma, the Greek Orpheus, Euax the Arab, and our own Albertus Magnus. While they can and sometimes do use such means, they also employ methods that don't require direct physical contact or bodily actions. They achieve these acts not through their own inherent abilities, but by utilizing various instruments. However, they are capable of inflicting various pains and illnesses directly, which they often do. For example, they frequently afflict nursing infants, causing them to suffer ailments. It is said that these spirits caused suffering to the babies who were later thrown into the Acheron River, and they could hardly be consoled by the four women nursing them. In our region, we refer to these babies as "wailers" as they grow weaker day by day. These spirits can also break chains, bring pestilence, and, as the story goes, steal a Greek bull offered to Jupiter during a sacrifice in Rome.

However, demons only communicate their wishes and desires through words or some sign to those individuals with whom they have formed pacts. Among the various malevolent acts they orchestrate, one of the most pernicious is the

act of binding through the use of specific magical knots.

Ancient practices involved tying these knots in a triangular pattern on cords to ward off harmful spirits or incorporating them into sacred threads to safeguard homes from malevolent forces. Despite these spirits being widely detested, they eagerly engage in the most abominable forms of witchcraft, always ready to fulfill the wicked desires of their conjurers, as long as the knots—where the witchcraft is bound through mathematical patterns—remain intact.

These actions can inflict severe suffering on individuals, resulting in various bodily afflictions, and sometimes, excruciating pain that can prove fatal. However, it's common for these spirits to inflict pain or torment related to the affected body part without causing any actual harm to the individual. This seems to be particularly the case when weakening that specific body part could hinder human reproduction, as these spirits aim to delay the fulfillment of the predestined number more than anything else. Their motivation leans more toward disrupting the natural order than striving to become more like God, as some philosophers suggest.

Consequently, their actions disrupt and hinder all other events stemming from this method of creation, which aims to attain the highest form of God's love. Another reason for this practice is that, as this body part's origin is linked to our birth, which is associated with sin, God, in accordance with the order of justice, permits this part to be more vulnerable to the influence of evil than others. It's said that more individuals have met their end in the throes of lust, influenced by Asmodeus, the demon of lust, than in banquets where Mammon, the demon of greed, was present.

Furthermore, these witchcraft practices are employed on both men and women, causing them to experience hindrances in their sexual desires, thus deterring them from pursuing marriage. While these practices may sometimes lead to arousal, they are deemed improper for engaging in sexual activity and procreation. I'm aware that some individuals have been subject to both forms of bindings.

Nonetheless, it's well-known that these bindings can be broken through various forms of deception. However, these diabolical tricks and love potions are not always enduring. Their dissolution typically occurs through the intervention of God or an angel with specific powers, surpassing the demon's if it's of inferior rank. If the demon is superior, nothing can prevail against it through its own power, as its nature excels in both understanding and movement, endowing it with superior nobility.

The demon can also be dispelled by a human, either through a granted power or through prayer. Alternatively, the demon can employ cunning and fraud, dispelling itself when summoned through a malevolent individual's magical ritual, involving such bindings and curses. In this manner, some have been healed of ailments like sciatica through incantations, as reported by Theophrastus. Cato even asserted that specific dislocated limbs could be aided by particular words. According to Serenus Sammonicus, Homer mentioned that certain words, enclosed in a scroll and worn around the neck, could expel fever, while Fernelius narrates an account of a particular ointment exposed to sunlight and accompanied by incantations, which miraculously cured someone of a dangerous illness overnight.

We've also observed that certain diseases can be averted through the use of the sign of the cross, whispered words, and the application of specific threads and wools to various wounds or dangerous situations. However, this doesn't imply that consulting witches to remove such afflictions is permissible, even though some argue it is. The evidence contradicts this claim, as nothing of the sort is ever sought from witches or malevolent individuals, as it would be a perilous mistake and a grave sin to engage in wrongdoing with the hope of achieving good.

Nonetheless, a credible author, Fernelius, asserts that he has witnessed individuals being liberated from diseases with the assistance of demons in this manner, only to have the same or even worse afflictions recur shortly thereafter.

Let us avoid any connection or familiarity with demons. In the sacrament of holy baptism, when we pledge our faith and devote ourselves to God, we

explicitly renounce the devil and his malevolent instruments. It is crucial to recognize that the actions of demons are invariably harmful to our physical and spiritual well-being, even if they appear promising at first glance. Ultimately, their intentions are nothing but the complete destruction of humanity and eternal damnation. The undeniable truth confirms this, for the devil is a deceiver and a murderer, and these are his well-documented traits. A case in point is Saul, who, in seeking counsel from a Pythoness, met his demise as a consequence of God's punishment.

These unholy deeds and abominable transgressions are not orchestrated by a collective of malevolent entities in a coordinated effort. This is not because the devil lacks the capability, but rather because either not all demons are invited into a single individual, or God, in His wisdom, prevents it from happening, so as not to reveal the demons' limitations in this regard.

In addressing the malevolence and depravity of these unclean spirits, it is appropriate to be as concise as possible. All praise and honor in this world belong to the Almighty God, from whom our existence and knowledge derive. We possess nothing of our own except for sin. Θε ῶ δώξα, ἀ μήν.

THE END.